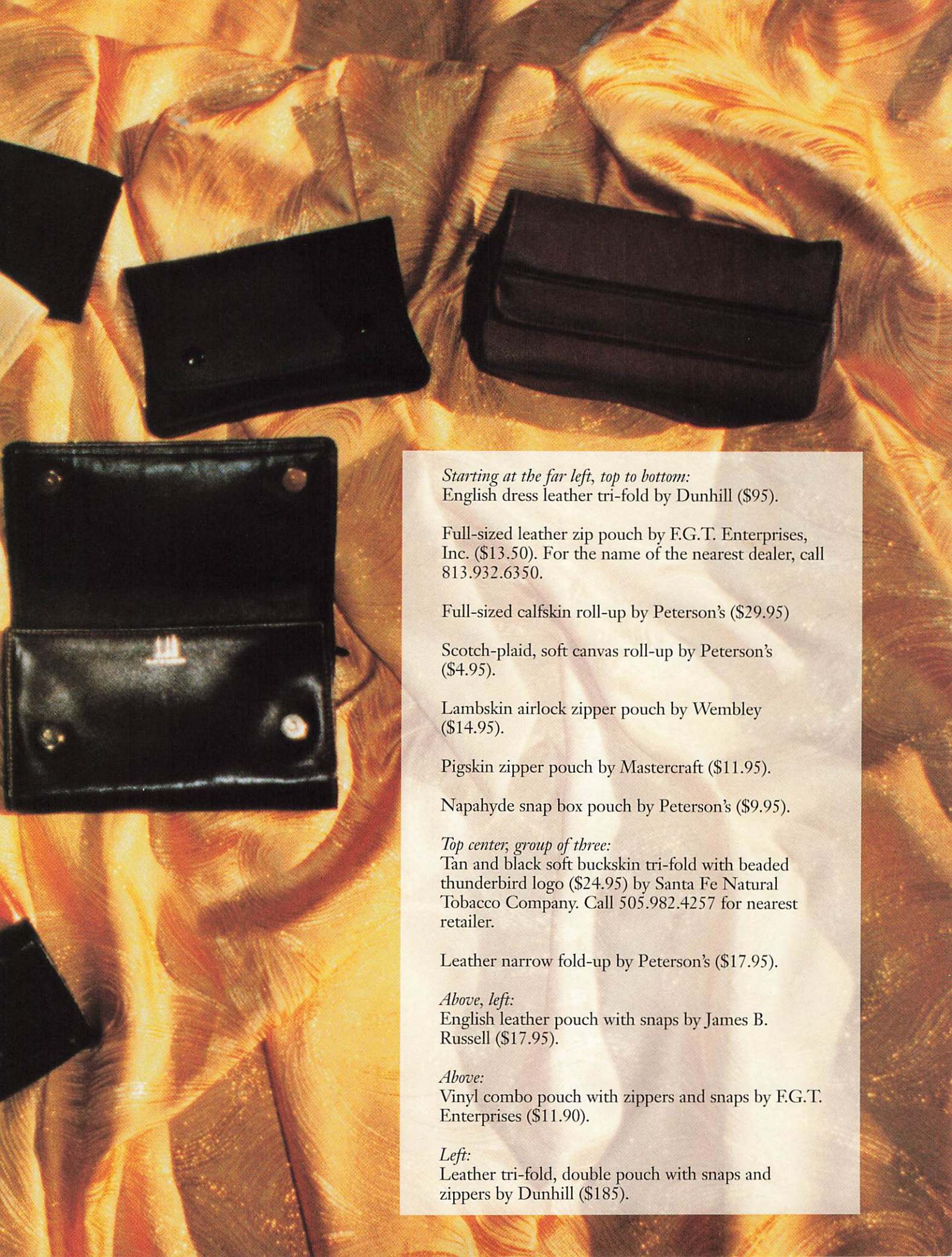

Starting at the far left, top to bottom:
English dress leather tri-fold by Dunhill ($95).

Full-sized leather zip pouch by F.G.T. Enterprises, Inc. ($13.50). For the name of the nearest dealer, call 813.932.6350.

Full-sized calfskin roll-up by Peterson's ($29.95)

Scotch-plaid, soft canvas roll-up by Peterson's ($4.95).

Lambskin airlock zipper pouch by Wembley ($14.95).

Pigskin zipper pouch by Mastercraft ($11.95).

Napahyde snap box pouch by Peterson's ($9.95).

Top center, group of three:
Tan and black soft buckskin tri-fold with beaded thunderbird logo ($24.95) by Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company. Call 505.982.4257 for nearest retailer.

Leather narrow fold-up by Peterson's ($17.95).

Above, left:
English leather pouch with snaps by James B. Russell ($17.95).

Above:
Vinyl combo pouch with zippers and snaps by F.G.T. Enterprises ($11.90).

Left:
Leather tri-fold, double pouch with snaps and zippers by Dunhill ($185).

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Civil Discourse

A conversation with novelist and Civil War historian Shelby Foote

By Larry O'Connor

Pipe-smoking novelist and historian Shelby Dade Foote once likened his pursuit of writing to a religion. It is a credo he has practiced almost daily since declaring himself a full-time writer 51 years ago—after the publication of his short story "Flood Burial" in the Saturday Evening Post.

In a remarkably prolific five-year period from 1949 to 1954, Foote published five critically acclaimed novels, including "Shiloh," a marvelous tale based on the Civil War battle of the same name.

Foote's accuracy, eye for detail and amazing ability to breathe life into historical figures and events prompted his editors at Random House to ask him in 1954 to write a short history of the Civil War. Two decades—and a million and a half words later—Foote completed his benchmark "The Civil War: A Narrative." The massive three-volume history is widely regarded as Foote's masterpiece and one of the definitive studies of the Civil War.

Foote was born in 1916 in Greenville, Mississippi, in the Mississippi Delta. An avid reader from childhood, Foote rejected formal education after his high school years. He did enroll for two years at the University of North Carolina, the majority of which time was spent in the library, poring through classic literature, ancient and modern.

The writer enlisted in the U.S. Army when Hitler invaded Poland at the outbreak of World War II. He rose to the rank of captain of artillery in Northern Ireland, but was court-martialed and dismissed in 1944 for a technical violation. (He visited his Irish girlfriend who lived 32 miles from the base in Belfast, two miles beyond the 30-mile limit.) Foote re-enlisted in 1945, this time into the Marine Corps.

Foote managed to bring his novelist's gift for storytelling to his lively, but always precise, recounting of the Civil War. In fact, Foote maintains that the historian's responsibility is to make the recounting of events as lively as the events themselves.

On the other hand, Foote summarily rejects both fictionalized histories and less-than-accurate historically based fiction. "I've never known a modern historical instance where the truth wasn't superior to anybody's distortions," he once said.

On the completion of his Civil War narrative, Foote returned to his beloved fiction. His novel "September, September," published in 1978, centers around the kidnapping of a black child in Memphis in 1957, at the time of desegregation in Little Rock and the Soviet Union's launch of the Sputnik.

Foote also served as technical adviser and a "talking head" on Ken Burns' award-winning television series on the Civil War. Now 80, Foote is at work on "Two Gates to the City," a novel he has worked on periodically since the 1950s.

With a deep, characteristically resonant Mississippi drawl, the ever-gracious Shelby Foote spoke with P&T *over the phone from Memphis where he has lived since the 1950s.*

P&T: You were once quoted as saying that if you had realized how long "The Civil War: A Narrative" was going to take to write you would never have taken it on.

SF: No. I wouldn't have. But I am now very glad that I did. And I am very proud of the work. I felt very happy with it all the way through. I worked hard, but I enjoyed every minute, so I don't deserve any special credit for it. People say that I gave up my life or I sacrificed this and that and the

On page 18, Shelby Foote is shown in the Tuilleries garden in Paris on his 75th birthday. "The naked lady alongside me is a Maillol and adds greatly to the scene," Foote writes. Above, he walks the streets of Soho District in New York City. (Photos by the author's son, Huger Foote.)

other. Anything I did, I did gladly.

P&T: Didn't it start out as a much shorter project?

SF: Yes, the contract called for a short history of the Civil War and I sat down and outlined it and I saw there wouldn't be any sense in doing an encapsulated history. So I wrote Random House and said I'd go spread-eagle on the thing. There was a little delay—about a week—and finally they said, "Go ahead." And I did—for the next 20 years.

P&T: Most people would consider it your master work? How do you feel?

SF: I like to think of myself as a novelist and I wouldn't want to praise anything over my novels. But I'll probably be remembered, if for anything, for the Civil War history.

P&T: You've called the Civil War America's greatest tragedy. What was most tragic about it?

SF: It seems to me that there wasn't any other way to settle the basic questions without fighting. The tragedy is that it couldn't have been averted—plus the fact that there were 1,075,000 casualties.

But the Civil War did settle two things. It put an end to slavery and it made secession impossible. Those are the two very important things.

P&T: Speaking of the Civil War, our readers would probably like to know if pipe smoking had a significant role in it?

SF: Absolutely. A lot of the men smoked pipes. Tobacco was a prized object. The Confederates had tobacco and the

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Northerners had coffee, and they used to swap whenever there was a truce. There were some informal ways to exchange things, without killing each other.

P&T: Specifically for tobacco-coffee barter?

SF: Yes, that was the swap. The Northerners got an issue of coffee. And there was practically no coffee in the South. They used all kinds of substitutes, especially peanuts ground up.

P&T: There is a wonderful scene in your novel "Shiloh," where Confederate soldiers overrun the abandoned tents of retreating Union forces and then stop to guzzle the steaming coffee left behind, one soldier chugging it right from the pot.

SF: They were crazy for coffee and, as the war went on, it got rarer and rarer. There was never any coffee grown in the South, and the Northern blockade kept the South from getting it.

P&T: And the tobacco was grown in the South, but not in the North...

SF: So it made a good swap.

P&T: How often would an exchange take place?

SF: Anytime there was some kind of truce...when there were burial details out, that would be an occasion, or when the armies had been in position for a long time on opposite sides of a river. They'd even make little boats with sails on them that they would sail back and forth to each other to make the exchange.

P&T: It's hard to imagine something like that happening in other wars. The idea of the Germans and Allied forces doing that in World War II, or Chinese and Americans in Korea...

SF: In a civil war, where you both are from the same country, where you have a common language and many common traditions, it leads to that kind of thing. It also leads to a more intense hatred. If you've ever seen two brothers have a fight, you know how savage it can be.

While we're talking about smoking and the Civil War, it is very late in the war during Banks' Red River Campaign in Louisiana that I first saw a reference to cigarettes. It was General Stone and he was sitting on a fence smoking a cigarette and people scarcely knew what that was. And that was in 1864.

P&T: One of the most famous cigar smokers, certainly of that era—Ulysses Grant—was originally a pipe smoker, wasn't he?

SF: Yes, he shifted to cigars because they were sent to him as gifts. [Editor's Note: This came about, according to Foote's novel "Shiloh," after Grant called for the unconditional surrender of besieged Confederate forces at Fort Donelson in Tennessee, earning public acclaim in the North and the nickname "Unconditional Surrender" (U.S.) Grant.] When he got up in the morning, very early of course, Grant put something like a dozen cigars in his uniform coat for the day. Grant also had a cigarette lighter— the first reference I'd ever seen to a cigarette lighter. It wasn't a lighter the way we think of it. It was sort of a pump thing that was lit by a flint.

There were a lot of pipe smokers, too. Of course a pipe was something you had to smoke during a lull. They seldom went into action smoking a pipe.

P&T: Could you tell me about your own pipe smoking...how did it come about?

SF: I started smoking the way most people did. I was 13 or 14 and I wanted to be grown-up. I actually started with a pipe, which was kind of strange. I guess it was because a pipe made me more grown-up. But I also smoked cigarettes. I spent 20 years writing those three volumes of the Civil War and I calculated one day, just for the fun of it, that at the rate of a pack and a half a day—which is really a rather low estimate because I nearly always had a cigarette in my lip and a pen in my right hand while I was working—that I smoked 150,000 regular, unfiltered Chesterfields. And I'm here to testify to it.

P&T: But in the evening you would smoke your pipe?

SF: That's right. With a pipe I try never to smoke while I am writing because the thing goes out every now and then. But it's a pipe I smoke while I'm reading or studying or doing anything like that.

P&T: Why is that?

SF: I don't know—it's got something to do with rumination, I guess. A pipe is a sort of a companion during study. A cigarette is just something to fiddle with. The pipes I smoked over the years have been kind of interesting. Like most people my age, I started way back then with a Kaywoodie, which was the pipe most admired. And later I moved on to GBD and then finally moved up to Dunhill. I've got perhaps 100 pipes. A lot of them have been sent to me by people who liked my work on the Civil War.

P&T: Of those 100 pipes, are they predominantly Dunhills?

SF: No, they are all kinds of pipes, including some of the weirdest ones you ever saw, from Calabash on down, from full Canadian to the little stubby pipes you can stick in your pocket.

P&T: How many of them do you smoke regularly?

SF: I'd say about 12 or 14. The rest of them are just sitting in the rack.

P&T: What kinds of pipes are the 12 or 14 that you actually use a fair amount of the time?

SF: They're mostly Comoys and Dunhills and that Italian one, I never can remember the name of them.

P&T: Bents or straights?

SF: They're mostly straights. I don't like a curved pipe. For some reason I don't really understand, saliva collects in a curved pipe. For me anyhow. Then it gets to bubbling, like a stew.

P&T: How about the size of the bowls? Do they vary?

SF: Yes. If I am at home being comfortable, then I can smoke a sizable pipe that will stay lit well. If I'm going out, I have to have something that fits in my pocket allright, so its better to use a smaller pipe. I've discovered a strange thing about pipes. There is absolutely no telling how a pipe's going to smoke until you smoke it. I don't care whether you paid $200 for it or $40. You still don't know whether it

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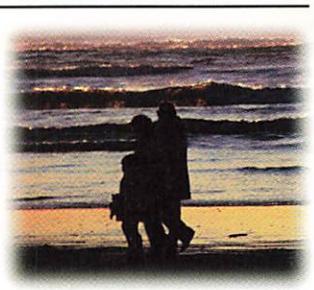

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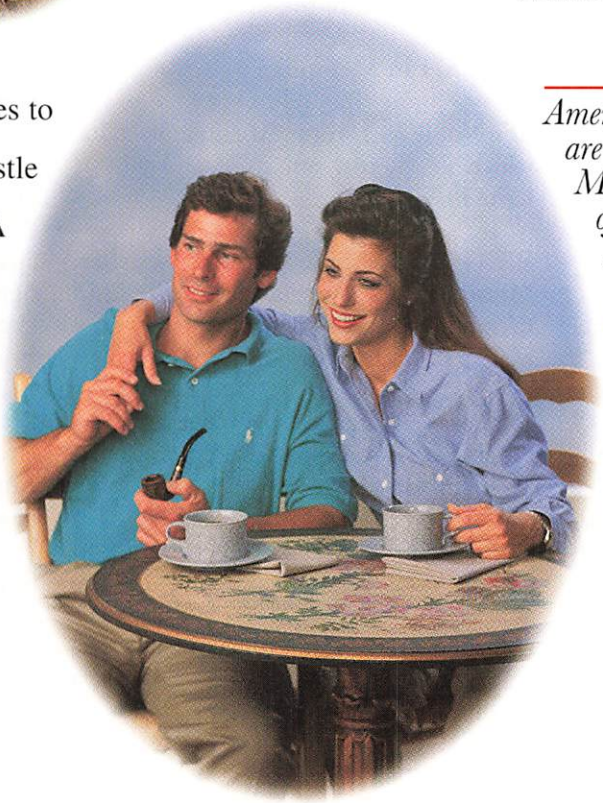

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will smoke well until you've had it for a while.

P&T: You're just smoking a pipe these days.

SF: Yes, eight years ago I had an angioplasty, one of the early ones. And they wanted me to quit smoking. I said I'd quit cigarettes, but I wasn't about to give up my pipe. They said that was a decent compromise. So I smoke nothing but a pipe and a very occasional cigar.

P&T: What kind of cigars do you favor?

SF: I don't have a particular favorite cigar. It's just that when I get a notion to have one, I buy a rather expensive one and smoke it rather carefully and evenly. I have a rule that is very strict about cigars: I never smoke a cigar unless I am sitting down to enjoy it. It's a special treat I give myself not over maybe four or five times a year. But the pipe I smoke almost constantly. When I gave up cigarettes, I became a full-time pipe smoker. I smoked my pipe about four times as much as I had before.

P&T: What kind of tobacco do you like?

SF: I've used exactly the same tobacco for over 50 years. It's called Edward G. Robinson, made in California. On the lid it says, "This will give you cancer." It doesn't say the surgeon general "thinks" or anything else, just absolutely flatly that this will give you cancer. It's some kind of California law. Incidentally, Edward G. is such a fine tobacco that it packs too tight in a pipe, so I mix it with a rough cut tobacco, about one-third of the rough cut, two-thirds of the Edward G., which makes just what I like.

P&T: At one time you were writing seven days a week, eight, 10, 12 hours a day. Are you still writing as much?

SF: No, I take Sundays off and often anytime I feel like it I take off. I am 80 years old. So I guess I can do that. Also, I walk a couple of miles every afternoon, which breaks into my day. That's on the advice of doctors, too.

P&T: Your current project—"Two Gates to the City"...

SF: That's a novel in progress, it's moving very slowly because I am doing other things. I had outlined the beginning of it and even started on it before I began the "Civil War." I came up here to Memphis intending to write "Two Gates to the City" and got sidetracked into the war.

P&T: What are the two gates to Memphis?

SF: It's not Memphis. It's the City of God. And it's about two routes there. It's about three cousins, one of whom is in business and another one is a person with a different kind of notion of what life is about. Each of them represents a way of life, and it's up to the third cousin, the youngest, to choose which way to follow. That's only part of the story.

P&T: Set in Memphis?

SF: No, it's set in the Mississippi Delta, which is where I am from and what I write mainly about.

P&T: Your hometown, Greenville, Mississippi, was not a seat of the kind of virulent racism found in some places in the South.

SF: No, it was much better than any other place in Mississippi with regard to that problem.

P&T: And you were outspoken against racism in the '60s...

SF: It was easy for me to be outspoken; I wasn't risking a business. If I'd had a small insurance business and I'd been outspoken, I would have gone out of business. Since I had none of those threats hanging over my head, I felt free to say anything I wanted to say.

P&T: But you lived in Mobile, Alabama, for a while and had some problems.

SF: I lived down on the Alabama coast for about six or eight months trying to build a house, and I ran into the Ku Klux Klan and George Wallace's people and all that.

P&T: For speaking out against racism?

SF: Yes.

P&T: You maintained, as the Civil Rights era moved on, that the key to progress would be for blacks to take the new opportunities afforded them rather than the road of confrontation.

SF: I've always thought the proper solution would be education—on both sides. It's a pet theory of mine and it's got a paradox to it. I think this country has two enormous sins on it. One is slavery and the other is emancipation.

They told four and a half million people, "You are free; now hit the road." But they didn't do a damned thing to help them. The Freedman's Bureau was a sorry joke. At least three-quarters of them were illiterate. Probably not one-tenth of them had a trade that they could make a living by outside of farming. And we're still suffering the consequences of that.

Integration of the schools was done in a wretched way. They started in the high schools instead of in the first grade, as they should have done. All kinds of mistakes were made during the civil rights struggle, because as in the Civil War, the leaders on both sides were so violently opposed to each other.

P&T: You once said something to the effect that a writer's style provides a window to the quality of his or her mind.

SF: That's right. Marcel Proust offers the explanation that I like best. He calls style a "quality of vision." It's the way you see the world. And you develop that style by very hard work. People don't quite understand that in learning how to write a good sentence a writer undergoes as rigid an education as a doctor does in learning to take out an appendix. It is really hard work. But people don't know that. They think you wake up in the middle of the night and dash off four or five thousand words. It's not that way, as you know.

P&T: What do you think your style says about the qualities of your mind?

SF: All I can say is I am sure it does tell something. But I'd have a hard time analyzing myself from the inside. *P&T*

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Mental "model"

guides Danish master

Jess Chonowitsch created an entire life balanced around pipe and family in his rural home. Each part supports the other as he creates briar masterpieces

by Dayton H. Matlick

Jess Chonowitsch spends most of each day in the one-man shop behind his rural home. Sometimes there is the whir of a motor running, the buzz of a sanding disc working briar. But most of the time there is the almost inaudible *shhhk, shhhk* sound of a small piece of sandpaper moving back and forth over a pipe for hours at a time. Fingers seek perfection while the mind floats free.

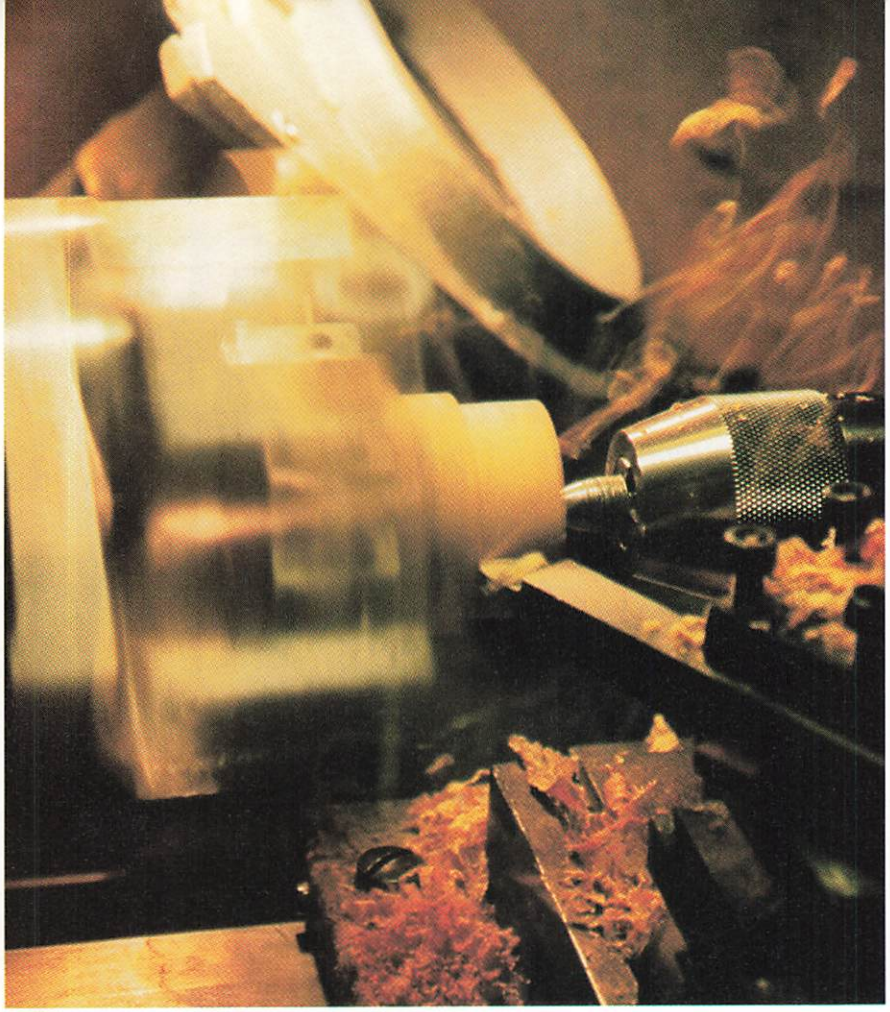
The 200 to 250 pipes produced each year in this comfortable, window-lined workshop are as good as any produced in the world, and better than most. Aside from the fact that Jess's family has to eat, producing a set number of pipes isn't a primary goal. Rather, the goal is to create an image—a model—in his mind, find the right piece of briar in his stock, and turn that image into a piece of art that can be touched, held and smoked. Art that is as close to perfection as he can reach. This includes solitary hours of hand sanding until the shape and touch of the wood are as close to that model as he can come.

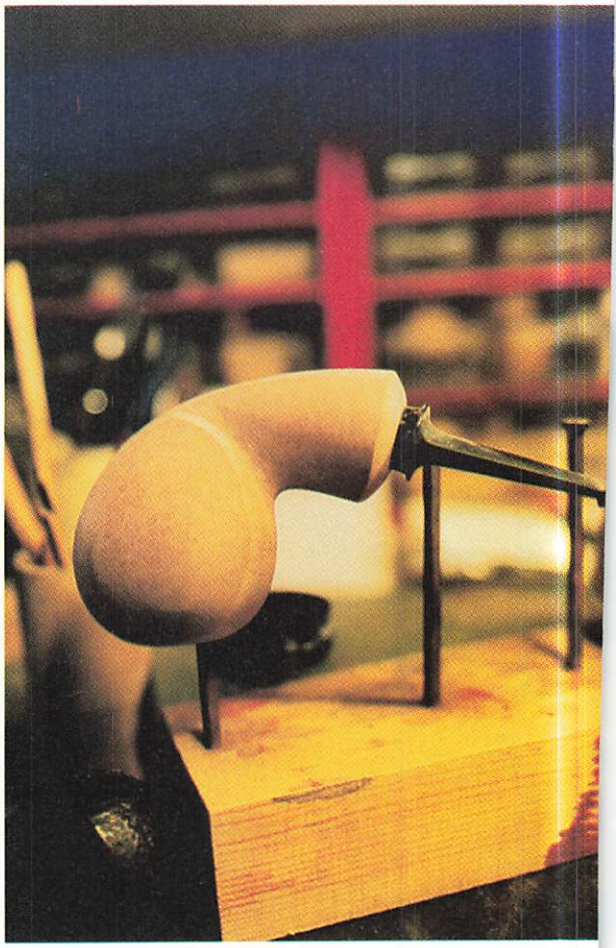
Creativity has an allure of its own. To taste of its almost addictive pleasure is to know fulfillment, satisfaction, a joy of being alive—a joy that can lead to all manner of changes in a life.

Jess (pronounced *yess*) grew up in Copenhagen where his father, Emil, was a hard-working tobacconist for 20 years. All of his life, young Jess had been surrounded by pets—cats, birds, turtles, but especially dogs. After graduation from high school, it seemed natural to sign up to study veterinary medicine. His first year behind him, his summer vacation goal was to find a job for about a month and a half that would generate enough money to allow him to travel around Europe for the other month before classes started again. That plan didn't last long.

His father had become disenchanted with 14-hour days as a tobacconist and had started the month before working part-time for Poul Rasmussen, a renowned maker of classic pipes. Yes,

Everything else was put aside once Jess experienced the joys of creating pipes by hand.





"...I could see the difference... then it was up to me to develop the technique that would enable me to make it better."

—*Jess*

he could use some temporary help; send the boy around, Rasmussen told Emil, beginning an odyssey that transformed Jess' life.

When the month and a half had passed, Jess was so captivated by the joy of working with his hands he asked Rasmussen if he would teach him how to become a pipemaker. Rasmussen argued that pipemaking wasn't a normal trade...there was no formal apprenticeship arrangement to follow. However, between them they came up with a three-year "learning contract."

"The first thing I did was to repair pipes," says Jess. "I put on new mouthpieces, cleaned pipes, polished pipes—made pipes new again. Rasmussen worked on pipes from a number of companies at that time, mostly English. People didn't want to send their pipes across the channel for repairs. I got black all over from cleaning and polishing old pipes, but it was a good way to learn about the materials. For example, when I made a new mouthpiece, I would find that sanding would take some of the original coloring off the briar. I had to learn how to mix the exact coloring to match.

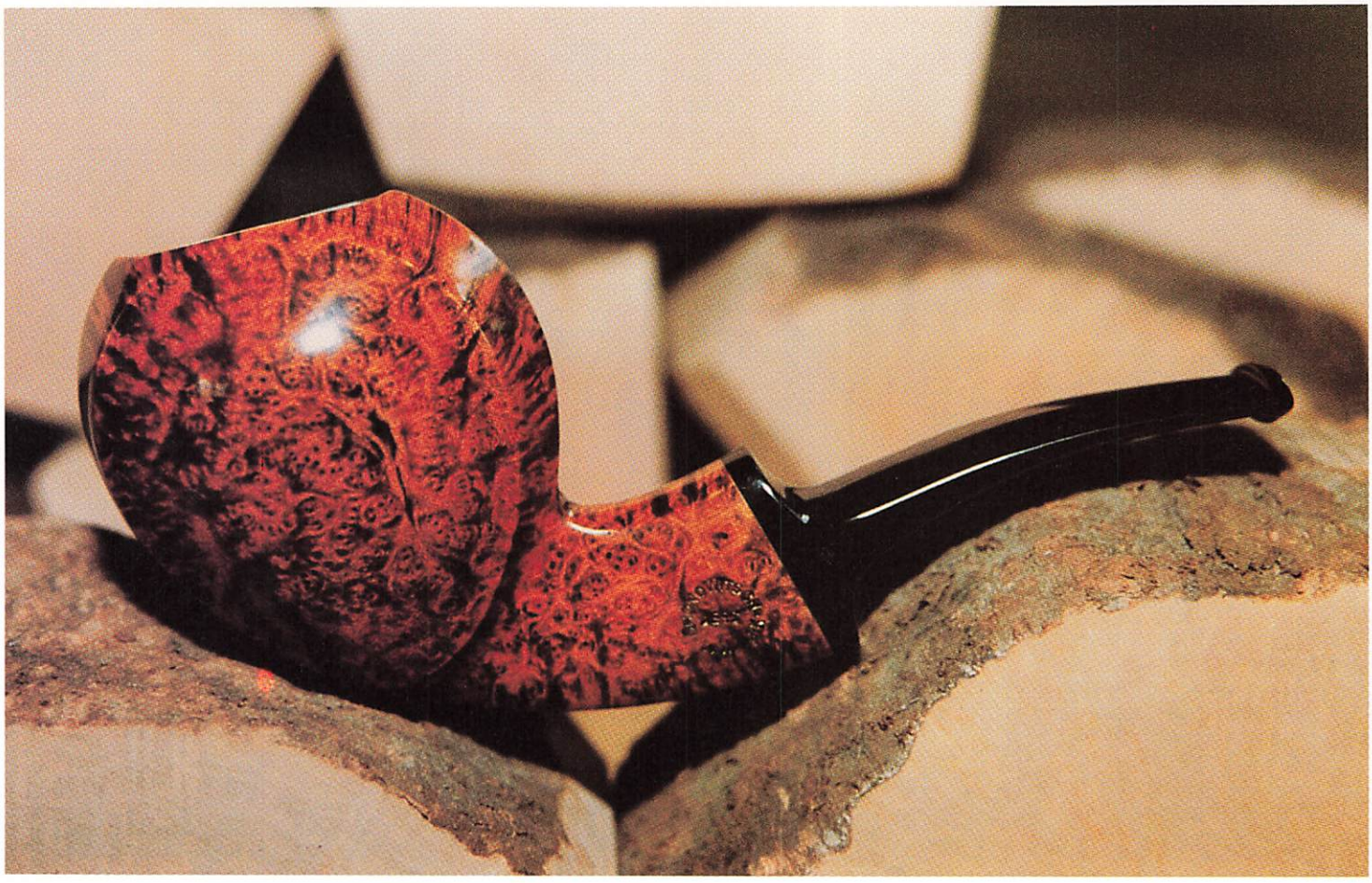
"Then he taught me the fundamentals about making pipes. I basically learned by doing. There was always a lot of briar around on which to practice that wasn't suitable for making quality pipes. When I showed Poul my efforts, he would say, 'That isn't good enough. This is wrong and that is wrong. Try again.' And that was the start of it.

"Sometime he would take my effort over to a sanding disk and change it. But he never let me see what he was doing. If necessary, he would hold his hand in the way. That was a good way in the end, although frustrating at the time. When he changed the pipe, I could see the difference with my eyes. And then it was up to me to develop the technique that would enable me to make it better. It helped me develop the solution in both my mind and in my hands.

"About a year and a half into the contract, his weak heart—he had a plastic replacement valve—gave out and he died. But by then I was far enough along that I could continue to make pipes in his name for six months, until Anne-Julie, his wife, could take over and run the workshop."

This left Jess with two problems. He needed money on which to live and he needed to learn more about making beautiful pipes. His solution contributed to both needs in a unique way. For money, he worked in the W.Ø. Larsen pipe factory located in the center of Copenhagen from eight in the morning until one in the afternoon. The factory approach was very repetitive, but Jess' previous training helped him so much that he was considered a gifted employee.

The afternoons were spent learning pipemaking about 200 yards up the street in the workshop of Sixten Ivarsson, the famous Danish



pipemaker who revolutionized pipemaking in Europe, and, later, around the world. Ivarsson perfected what has become known worldwide as the freehand pipe, although he never used the word himself. Jess was learning at the same time as Sixten's son, Lars, who has become a famous pipemaker in his own right and with whom Jess stays in regular contact.

It was under Sixten and his departure from strictly classical shapes that Jess learned to use his creativity to discover new models of pipes.

"Sixten was a great man to learn from...the most creative pipemaker at that time...maybe ever," says Jess. "The afternoons were a much more relaxing time than in the factory. First, we would start with tea or coffee and bread and sausages. There was never a hurry when you worked with Sixten."

"It was quite different from other places that produced pipes. There you had to finish so many pipes every day. With Sixten, I could use the whole day to try and find a new shape. But then, he wasn't paying me any money, either. I was only there for learning.

"When I made something wrong, he'd tell me immediately. 'You must think that's not good enough. You can do better than that.'"

The instruction was free. However, their agreement provided that when Jess made something Sixten decided was good enough to sell, they split the proceeds between them. Also, when Sixten had a lot of orders, he would make the total shape and then Jess would do the final sandpapering, coloring and polishing.

"I learned slowly the way to make his model and to make it in the way he wanted it. I never saw him in a hurry. He always took it slow and good. But I was always encouraged to use my own creativity in my own work. He never said, 'You must do this model in this way.' Instead, he would encourage me to pick up a piece of briar and make it into whatever pipe I wanted."

Another thing Jess learned from Sixten was to make the mouthpieces just as creatively as the pipes. In his other experiences, he had used preformed mouthpieces that only required limited changes to fit them to the finished pipes. Sixten insisted, however, that Jess start with a blank rod of vulcanite and shape the mouthpiece to fit the exact needs of each different pipe. Mouthpieces, like every part of the pipe, must be technically and aesthetically correct, he declared.

Today, Jess still primarily uses vulcanite for his mouthpieces, but it is a different vulcanite than existed in Sixten's day. The expensive, modern German version polishes to a deeper black that holds its shine longer and is more resilient between the teeth.

Sixten and Poul Rasmussen had worked

A special machine is used for the first cuts. In contrast to many other machines with the same general purposes, the block is locked into place and then spun while, first, excess wood is removed from the bowl area and, second, the tobacco chamber is cut. Sanding discs help form the general shape of the pipe, but the critical final sanding is all done by hand. The finished product reflects both the creativity and effort.

A farmhouse in a rural village provided both a challenge and relief from big city life.

together in their earlier days, before differences caused them to part. Throughout their lives, according to Jess, they argued between themselves about every subject imaginable. If Sixten used a 4 mm drill for the air passage, Poul would use 3.6. Poul concentrated on classical pipe shapes; Sixten focused on what we today call freehand pipes.

Jess studied with Sixten for two years, until he was drafted for 18 months of mandatory military service. (To his delight, he found himself in the cavalry, riding and caring for horses.) Six more months with Sixten after his discharge to get his hands back in shape and Jess and his father started their own workshop. Then, in 1972 Jess started his own workshop to start building his own name, although he continued to help his father when needed for six or seven years.

His father made many of the machines he used to make the classical shapes he learned from Rasmussen. When he closed his workshop in 1992, Jess took the machines and now uses them in his work. "You can't buy machines made for making pipes. They have to be made by a man who works in mechanics. You can't buy a drill for a tobacco hole. We don't make pipes in the industrial way, so you have to make everything yourself or have someone make it for you. That's why I keep it. Also, it belonged to my father." (Jess' father passed away last year.)

The most complicated machine in the workshop is used to drill the tobacco chamber and the air passage. It is unusual in that the block of briar is locked into a form and then spun while the bit remains stationary, rather than the other way around. Other machinery is generally limited to sanding disks and buffing wheels.

Both Jess and his father fulfilled dreams of moving from the center of Copenhagen into rural areas, far from the noise, clutter and smells of the big city. Jess and Bonnie, his wife, moved about 40 miles south, to the small town of Bråby. That was 30 years ago, about the same time that Jess started making pipes on his own.

The house they bought had been part of a huge agricultural estate. With modern mechanization, the estate no longer needed the hundreds of houses it had built for its workers and sold some to the public.

It was a challenge! There was no running water in the house. Toilet facilities were two dilapidated outhouses that held buckets. The contents of the buckets, in turn, were emptied on the garden and worked into the soil.

In the process of rebuilding and modernizing the now comfortable house, Jess and Bonnie became familiar with just about every rock and board.

Where the two outhouses stood, Jess built his workshop. Behind the house and in front of the workshop is a flower garden with a patio for sitting

The thatched roof on the Chonowitsch farmhouse is thick and strong, just like the rest of the structure. Behind the house, a comfortable workshop was built for creating pipes.

in the evenings. All around them neighbors raise chickens, pigs and other animals, so meat and eggs can often be bought just a few steps away.

Daughters Sara, 24, and Julie, 21, grew up under the thatched roof, sheltered by the thick walls. While Bonnie was building a career as a designer of store windows in surrounding towns, Jess was always at home when the children left for school and when they returned. The sisters spent many hours in the workshop with their father, building a close relationship.

Today, Sara is taking classes that will enable her to work with handicapped children. Julie, in turn, is learning flower design. Jess and Julie have talked about pipemaking, but Jess has insisted that she learn another way of making a living before learning to make pipes. "This business is so unpredictable that she needs a way of supporting herself during the slow times," says Jess.

With Sixten's teachings and examples firmly lodged deep within, Jess is open to each concept that comes into his mind. This is a luxury that isn't open to many pipemakers, who are limited to creating the same models over and over for a set market.

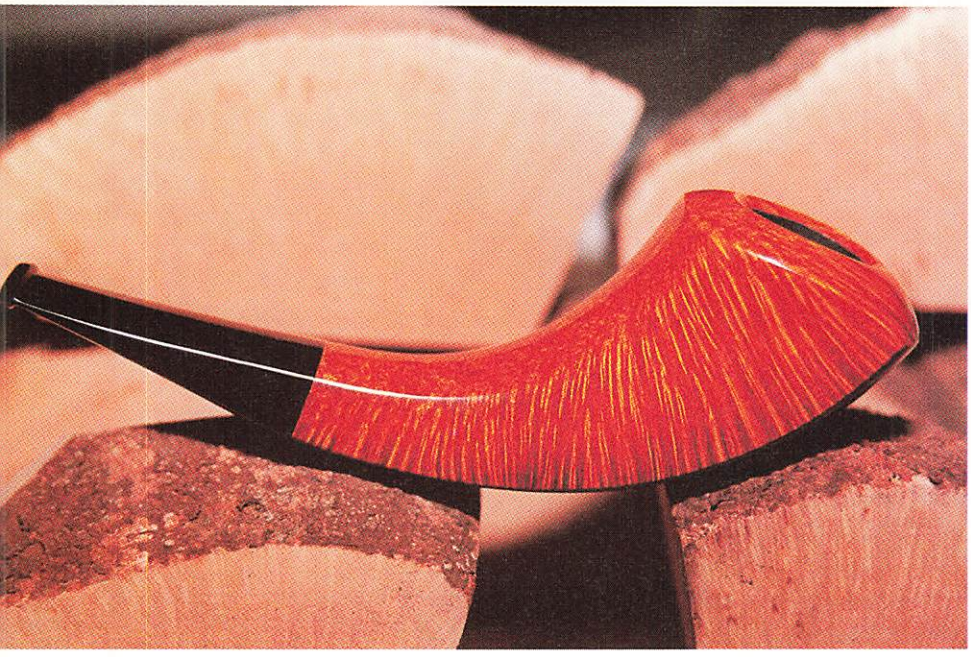
"Pipemaking has been much easier for me during the last 10 years. Now I have a lot of customers all over the world. That means I can make many different shapes and sizes and still have a market for them. The smaller shapes go to Japan, the larger to the United States and Germany. Classical shapes or really beautiful pieces of briar go to Switzerland and northern Italy. It is important to know that if I make a beautiful pipe, there is always somewhere to sell it. Under these conditions there is a lot more freedom to create than there was in the beginning."

Although Jess strives for perfection in every pipe, every now and then he creates a pipe that is extra special. Usually no more than one or two pipes a year, and in some years none, fit the criteria. Those pipes he identifies with a special "bird" stamp. Why a bird?

"See that pigeon house out that window? Every day that I have worked here for 30 years there have been pigeons outside. It couldn't be anything other than a bird!"

While working, Jess is constantly putting his favorite quarter-bent pipe into his mouth, lighting it, taking a couple of puffs and then putting it down. "I'd never do well in a long smoking contest," he says. "I keep putting my pipe down and then I have to relight it again...and again. I like the quarter-bents because they feel good in my mouth at the angle in which I work."

Jess' favorite tobaccos are primarily Virginia. His favorite Danish tobacco is heavy on the Virginia with some Oriental...and perique for "spice." While in the U.S. recently he was pleased to discover McClelland's #25 Virginia and #27 Virginia,



both of which possess the Virginia flavor he likes so well.

As is true for all pipemakers, a pipe starts with the purchase of briar. Jess is very particular about the briar he buys, traveling to various sources in Corsica and Greece to make sure each piece is the very best. And he is just as careful about the drying of the briar. To keep the moist briar from cracking, he carefully controls the humidity over a one-and-a-half to two-year period, reducing it very slowly. Some briar is held 10 years or longer, until just the right inspiration comes, requiring that particular block of briar for its completion. "I don't need to work briar that isn't right," says Jess.

"The normal way for me to begin a pipe is to have an idea in my mind. Then I find just the right piece of briar stored away. I know each and every piece of briar and about where it is located. I never start making a pipe because of the grain. If I do, that means I don't get to decide anything. I may get a beautiful straight grain, but it isn't a special shape. The briar then decides the final shape; that's not fun.

"I must decide what I am going to do. That means I must start with the idea in my head and then try to select a piece of briar—or several pieces—that fits the idea. For this reason I am not limited like the factory artisans are. So I tell the briar suppliers, I don't care about the shape of the block as long as it is a beautiful piece of briar, beautiful grain. It is up to me to find the briar that properly matches the pipe in my head."

Few briar providers are able to meet Jess' requirements. And those who do demand high prices. While most pipemakers pay less than $10 for a block of plateaux briar, Jess pays an average of $60 a block, with some costing $80 or more, depending on size and quality.

There are two types of quality in a finished pipe: one of design and finish, and the other technical. In addition to beauty and balance, Jess has

been trained to ensure technical perfection, too. That means an easy smoke.

"If you are a good pipe smoker, you know that some pipes smoke better than others. In some pipes there is not enough air. The mouthpiece may be too bent, too narrow or drilled improperly—the airflow is somehow obstructed. There can also be a problem with uneven burning of tobacco if the air hole does not connect directly in the center of the bottom of the tobacco chamber.

"If there isn't enough air through the air passage, you have to draw so hard you increase the temperature in the tobacco. As a result, it burns your tongue. I use a 4 mm drill—the hole is a little bigger than the drill—in the shank. I use a 3 mm drill in the mouthpiece and widen it out at the outlet. It is important that the airflow be unobstructed by anything from the bowl into the mouth.

"A smoker can detect a potential of poor airflow sometimes by blowing into a pipe. If there is a high whistling sound—not everyone can hear it—then there isn't enough air. You must be able to blow slowly without any problem or any whistling."

"A pipe buyer should also consider the kind of tobacco he or she smokes when picking a pipe. For example, if you prefer flake tobacco, you need a pipe with thick walls to deal with the greater heat generated. If you want to smoke very loose tobacco, then you need a bigger air hole in the pipe. A thicker-walled pipe is necessary if you want to use it outside walking in the mountains, hunting or sailing. A thin-walled pipe would be a disaster for these activities. You should tell your tobacconist the kind of tobacco you plan to smoke in a pipe you are considering so he can advise you properly," Jess advises.

In addition to smooth pipes, Jess creates some beautiful sandblasted pipes. "I only make them when I have to. When a flaw shows up at the last minute in an otherwise perfect pipe, I sandblast the pipe so I can get paid for all the work I put into it. It is also a practical form. It is convenient to have a sandblasted pipe if you are going hunting or into the mountains or fishing. You can put a sandblasted pipe in your pocket with keys or other things and it won't be harmed. It gives a good smoke because it has more surface and smokes cooler.

He also will make pipes to order. Usually it takes between two and six months—with an average of three—to fill the order. Time depends on the length of the waiting list and the difficulty of the project.

Although Jess is very aware of and interested in his pipe-smoking clients, there are several things that don't fit the variety of models in his head, including rustication and filters.

"I don't rusticate pipes because I want nature to decide how the pipe will look. When I use sand I always follow the grain in the briarwood. If I were to rusticate, then I am creating a surface that is not normal to the briar.

"I also don't make filter pipes, even though I sell many of my pipes in Germany. With a filter pipe, I can't connect the mouthpiece and the bowl properly. I try to explain to my customers to smoke a little less, but smoke better. With a filter, you cannot take tobacco the same way."

Jess has been making pipes for 30 of his 49 years. Although it is not a vocation with which a person can become rich, it does provide special benefits. As he sits in his workshop, quietly and deliberately working with his strong, capable hands, there is a sense of peace and "rightness" about him.

"Making pipes is very satisfying," says Jess. "A special benefit was having one of us home when the children were small. That was extremely important to them.

"It's also nice to work with my hands. Of course, I can't do anything else now; it's the only education I have. But I never get tired of making pipes. Whenever I pick up a new block of briarwood, I can find a whole world in it. I have to think about the shape, look at the briar and then start. It's never the same." *P&T*

In the United States, Jess Chonowitsch pipes are available only through Marty Pulver's Sherlock's Haven, 275 Battery Street, San Francisco, CA 94111, telephone 415.362.1405, and Uptown's Smoke Shops, 3900 Hillsboro Road, Nashville, TN 37215, pipeline telephone: 615.292.9576.

NOMENCLATURE

Jess pipes are stamped with the name Chonowitsch in a circle at the top, Denmark at the bottom and Jess in the center. As described in the article, a few select pipes are also marked with a bird stamp. No other nomenclature is used. Jess pipes can be distinguished from those made by his father by the fact the father used only the name CHONOWITSCH, in straight block letters. All Chonowitsch pipes made since 1992 have been made by Jess.

(Note: Chonowitsch isn't a Danish name. His grandfather, Julius, a Russian classical violinist, was performing in Denmark when the Russian revolution broke out. He remained in Denmark, fell in love with and married his Danish piano accompanist. As a teenager, Jess was also musically inclined. In contrast, however, he played drums in a Beatles-style rock band that toured all over Denmark. The senior Chonowitsch was noticeably upset by the direction of Jess' music, but is credited with never voicing his disappointment.)

"Whenever I pick up a new block of briar, I can find a whole world in it."

—*Jess*

With his background in both classical and freehand approaches, Jess moves comfortably back and forth across the line between the two, as shown in the pipes on the opposite page. However, the final results are both very Danish and very Chonowitsch.

Mark Twain

The first truly authentic American literary voice drew inspiration from genius, experience, exasperation and tobacco

by Chuck Stanion

"Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits."

"I smoke a good deal," wrote Mark Twain in 1891, "that is to say, all the time." It was not an exaggeration. He bought cigars by the barrel and pipes by the gross.

Called by his grandniece, Jean Webster, "the smokiest man" she could remember, and "a human furnace," Twain was known to smoke as many as 30 cigars a day and intersperse them with pipes. "I do not know how much a man may smoke and live," wrote Twain's friend William Dean Howells, "but apparently he smoked as much as a man could, for he smoked incessantly."

Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens in Florida, Missouri, in 1835 and raised on the banks of the Mississippi River in Hannibal, Missouri, Twain reported that he "was a sickly and precarious and tiresome and uncertain child, and lived mainly on allopathic medicines during the first seven years of my life." But at age seven, peer pressure induced him to try tobacco, and his constitution improved to the point where he would later use his robust health as a justification for refusing to quit smoking.

That first introduction to tobacco is related in Twain's "Autobiography":

> *It is the part of my education which I look back upon with the most satisfaction. My first visit to the school was when I was seven. A strapping girl of fifteen, in the customary sunbonnet and calico dress, asked me if I 'used tobacco'—meaning did I chew it. I said, no. It roused her scorn. She reported me to all the crowd, and said—*
>
> *"Here is a boy seven years old who can't chaw tobacco.'*
>
> *By the looks and comments which this produced, I realized I was a degraded object; I was cruelly ashamed of myself. I determined to reform.*

That reform was immediate, passionate and long-lasting, as Clemens embarked on a 67-year-long relationship with tobacco. "I was not able to learn to chew tobacco," he writes. "I learned to smoke fairly well, but that did not conciliate anybody."

Actually, Clemens did learn to chew, and this example introduces an interesting aspect of Mark Twain—it is difficult to use his writings to glean biographical information, because he alters his facts according to the requisites of the literary situation. Sam Clemens is the man; Mark Twain is a construct, a writing tool, an identity invented by Clemens to better execute his distinctive brand of writing.

That is why Mark Twain can write:

> *When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one,*

Photo courtesy of the Mark Twain Boyhood Home in Hannibal, Missouri.

"Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in."

I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.

A pithy message, presented with humor, even though Sam Clemens' father, John Clemens, died when Sam was only 12.

And that is why Twain can claim in his autobiography that he never learned to chew tobacco, in his dictations to his secretary that he quit chewing tobacco while a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi, and in an 1875 sketch called "History Repeats Itself" that he heeded his grandmother's warning about the evils of chewing tobacco:

How well I remember my grandmother's asking me not to use tobacco, good old soul! She said, "You're at it again, are you, you whelp? Now, don't ever let me catch you chewing tobacco before breakfast again, or I lay I'll blacksnake you within an inch of your life!" I have never touched it at that hour of the morning from that time to the present day.

These contradictions are part of what make up the legendary duality of Mark Twain. A Southerner from a slave-holding family who fought (briefly) for the South in the Civil War, he later helped Ulysses S. Grant publish his memoirs, which saved Grant's family from financial ruin.

A Western laborer and miner, he was a hard-drinking, hard-smoking, profane, unrefined bohemian who married into society, craved respectability and became an esteemed businessman, publisher and author.

A satirist of the Gilded Age and its money-grubbing audacity, he longed for great affluence, lusting not just for financial independence, but outrageous, immense Aladdinesque wealth. Renowned for his bitter, despairing cynicism (somewhat unmerited), he is yet best known for making people laugh. This is the complexity in the Clemens/Twain personality that has garnered the fascination of six generations of readers and scholars.

Clemens was a man of many vocations: printer, riverboat pilot, silver and gold miner, newspaperman, lecturer, world-traveling correspondent, humorist, publisher, inventor, speculator, novelist, man of letters, American icon—but he had one identity that never altered: he was resolutely, inflexibly, unshakably a smoker.

Born in tobacco country, where "poverty itself was able to buy" tobacco, Clemens spent two to three months every year during his youth at his Uncle John Quarles' farm, on which—among other crops—tobacco was grown and cured. Hannibal, too, where Clemens spent the other part of the year, boasted a tobacco factory. But even considering tobacco's easy accessibility during his youth, Clemens became a man more captivated with tobacco than most.

"Let me tell you briefly the history of my personal relation to tobacco," he wrote. "It began, I think, when I was a lad, and took the form of a quid, which I became expert in tucking under my tongue. Afterward I learned the delights of the pipe, and I suppose there was no other youngster of my age who could more deftly cut plug tobacco so as to make it available for pipe-smoking."

If we may infer that the fiction of Mark Twain reflects something of the life of Samuel Clemens, a look at Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer will reveal the significance of pipe smoking to the young Clemens, for these two great characters in literature are smokers in an authentic sense: their smoking is not flaunted, it is not an afterthought or mere literary device; it is integral to their dispositions.

At the beginning of "Huckleberry Finn," smoking is one of the first issues that emphasize Huck's discontent with being "sivilized" by the Widow Douglas, who takes him into her home. He doesn't like the clothes, or the food, or the Bible lessons, and especially doesn't like the smoking regulations:

Pretty soon I wanted to smoke, and asked the widow to let me. But she wouldn't. She said it was a mean practice and wasn't clean, and I must try to not do it any more. That is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don't know nothing about it. Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being gone, you see, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had some good in it. And she took snuff, too; of course that was all right, because she done it herself.

Part of Huck's charm is that he takes note of the hypocrisy all around him, but still maintains an innocent, nonjudgmental attitude. Later, for example, at the most important juncture of the novel, when he decides, "All right, I'll go to hell" instead of turning the runaway slave Jim over to the authorities, it is himself he chastises for moral turpitude instead of the insane society that allows such oppression.

In "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," when Tom, Huck and Joe Harper have run away from home, Huck teaches his friends to smoke corncob pipes, and while Tom and Joe profess a love for the new pastime, they get gradually more and more sick from it, and have to crawl away and sleep it off—but Huck revels. And since Huck is the single most independent character in the novel, smoking in a way symbolizes independence from the restrictions of civilization.

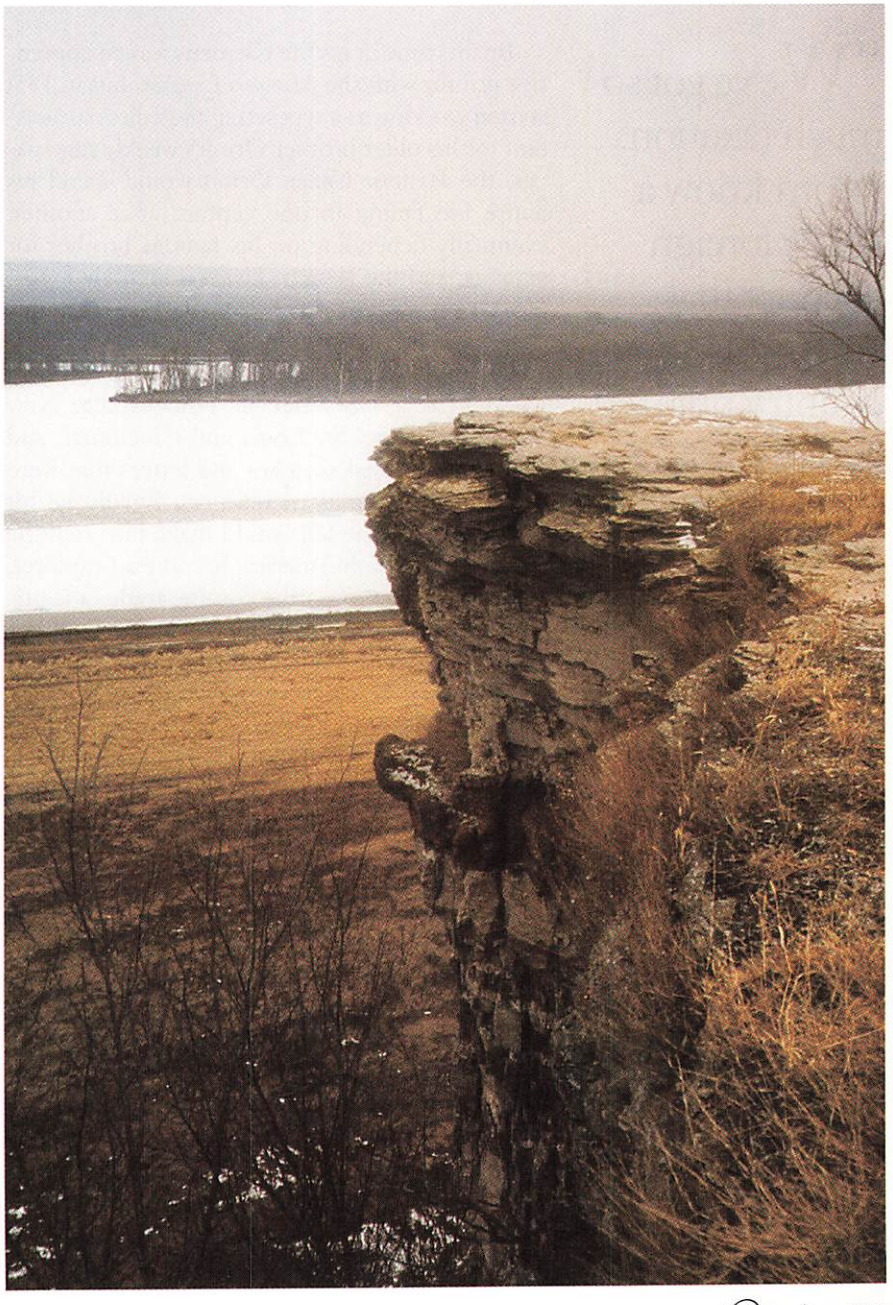
But Tom recovers from his first smoking experience, and is an avid smoker in the sequel, "Tom Sawyer Abroad." So invested is he in his smoking, in fact, that he puts a temporary stop to his balloon exploration of the world for the sake of a pipe, as Huck Finn narrates:

But we had an accident, now, and it fetched all the plans to a standstill. Tom's old ornery corncob pipe had got so old and swelled and warped that she couldn't hold together any longer, notwithstanding the strings and bandages, but caved in and went to pieces. Tom he didn't know what to do. The professor's pipe wouldn't answer; it warn't anything but a mershum, and a person that's got used to a cob pipe knows it lays a long ways over all the other pipes in this world, and you can't get him to smoke any other. He wouldn't take mine, I couldn't persuade him. So there he was.

It is a tragedy, and the adventure cannot go on until a replacement pipe is found. Tom wants to scour Egypt and Arabia for a new corncob, but the guide says it is an impossible mission. So the explorers put down on Mount Sinai and send Jim and the guide back home for a "nearly new" corncob Tom has left in his kitchen.

With the balloon traveling at 300 miles per hour, Tom estimates, Jim will be back and Tom can be comfortably smoking again by the next day. "There ain't no occasion to fool around," he says. "I want a smoke, and the quicker you fetch that pipe the better."

Smoking was just as important to the young Sam Clemens when he was Tom and Huck's age. He smoked constantly, though there were occasions when he slowed down and even stopped—temporarily. For three solid months in 1850, when Clemens was 15 years old, he pledged to



At the foot of Hannibal's "Cardiff Hill" stand Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, a monument to Twain's depiction of American boyhood. In Huck's hip pocket is the unmistakable outline of a pipe whose reed stem protrudes a quarter inch into the light. Lover's Leap, below, offers Hannibal's finest view of the great Mississippi River.

stop smoking and chewing tobacco (and stop drinking and swearing) so that he could wear the red merino sash of the Hannibal chapter of the Cadets of Temperance, a group of high moral character that marched on May Day and the Fourth of July. "But you can't keep a juvenile moral institution alive on two displays of its sash per year," writes Twain.

As a private, I could not have held out beyond one procession, but I was Illustrious Grand Worthy Secretary and Royal Inside Sentinel, and had the privilege of inventing passwords and of wearing a rosette on my sash. Under these conditions, I was enabled to remain steadfast until I had gathered the glory of two displays. Then I resigned straightaway.

I had not smoked for three full months, and no words can adequately describe the smoke appetite that was consuming me.

"We've got so much taxation. I don't know a single foreign product that enters this country untaxed except the answer to a prayer."

By this time in his life Clemens was an apprentice printer with the *Missouri Courier*, but in 1851 started working as a typesetter and editorial assistant for his older brother Orion's weekly newspaper, the *Western Union*. Orion would spend his entire life failing in one venture after another, eventually depending on his famous brother for support, and the *Western Union* is an early example; Orion was never able to make enough money to pay Sam his promised $3.50 per week salary.

Leaving Hannibal in 1853, Clemens traveled, working as a typesetter in Philadelphia, New York, Muscatine, St. Louis and Cincinnati, and writing occasional sketches and letters that were published in various newspapers. Finally he hit upon a scheme he felt would make him rich: he would go to South America, become an explorer, and perhaps get in on the cocaine trade (a legitimate business in that time).

But during the steamboat trip to New Orleans, an old ambition returned, and after hounding the riverboat pilot, Horace Bixby (a "lightning pilot" who was still on the river in 1913), for hundreds of river miles, he finally got Bixby to take him on as an apprentice. Clemens' education as a cub pilot and his piloting experiences are related in his book, "Life on the Mississippi."

It took two years to earn his pilot's license, and he spent an additional two years in this profession that he claimed to love more than any other he subsequently followed. Then the Civil War disrupted river traffic. Afraid that he might be impressed as a Union gunboat pilot, Clemens went home to Hannibal, helped form the Marion Rangers—a group of Confederate volunteers comprised mainly of his old school chums—blundered around in the woods for two weeks retreating from rumors of Union armies, and then retired from the Confederacy. "And the Confederacy fell," he would later wryly remark.

Orion had been appointed secretary of the Nevada Territory that year, and Clemens decided to accompany his brother west as his personal secretary, paying both their fares, since Orion, characteristically, could not afford it.

Clemens' adventures in the west became the raw material for his book "Roughing It," in which there is one pipe smoking-related sketch of particular interest, when the narrator is motivated to quit smoking.

Caught at night in the desert in a violent snowstorm, he and his two companions, convinced of their imminent demise, determine to reform their bad habits, if only for the few hours remaining them. One throws his deck of cards into the snow, the other his bottle of whiskey, leaving only the narrator to follow: "We were all sincere, and all deeply moved and earnest, for we were in the presence of death and without hope. I threw away my pipe."

However, their reform is short-lived—because they are not. Morning reveals that they are directly outside the stage station. "I have scarcely exaggerated a detail of this curious and absurd adventure," writes Twain. "We actually went into camp in a snowdrift in a desert, at midnight in a storm, forlorn and hopeless, within fifteen steps of a comfortable inn."

For two hours we sat apart in the station and ruminated in disgust. The mystery was gone, now, and it was plain enough why the horses had deserted us. Without a doubt they were under that shed a quarter of a minute after they had left us, and they must have overheard and enjoyed all our confessions and lamentations.

After breakfast we felt better, and the zest for life soon came back.... Presently an uneasiness came over me—grew upon me—assailed me without ceasing. Alas, my regeneration was not complete—I wanted to smoke!

The narrator discovers how easy it is to reform when about to die; how hard it is when faced with a full life. "I shortly found myself sneaking among the snowdrifts hunting for my pipe." Ashamed of his weakness, he hides in the barn to smoke his pipe. "As I turned the corner, smoking, Ollendorff turned the other with his bottle to his lips, and between us sat the unconscious Ballou deep in a game of 'solitaire' with the greasy old cards! Absurdity could go no farther. We shook hands and agreed to say no more about 'reform' and 'examples to the rising generation.'"

Unable to secure a fortune through mining and speculation, Clemens began writing for various western newspapers, including Virginia City's *Territorial Enterprise* and Carson City's *Silver* Age, for the first time using the pseudonym "Mark

Twain" in an 1863 letter to the *Enterprise*.

He continued to travel, and in 1865 found himself in Angels Camp in Calaveras County, where he first heard the story of the jumping frog, which he would immortalize through his use of deadpan delivery.

His reputation as a writer began to grow when he became a correspondent for the *Sacramento Union*, writing letters back from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). It was upon his return to California that he started lecturing on the Sandwich Islands, and discovered his monumental talent for the lecture platform.

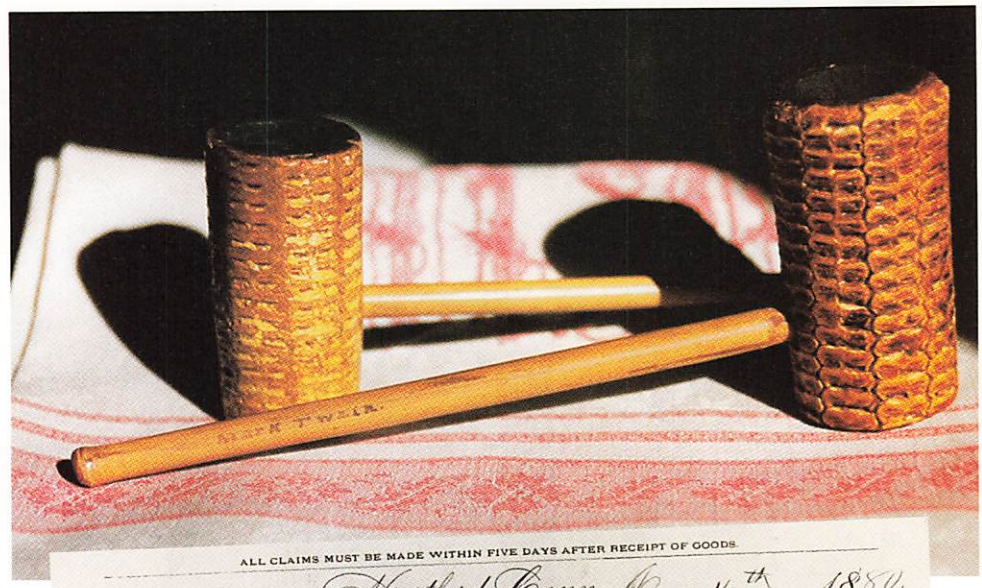
And finally, in 1867, he embarked on the trip that would launch his career as a writer of books and introduce him to his future wife: the Quaker City excursion to the Holy Land.

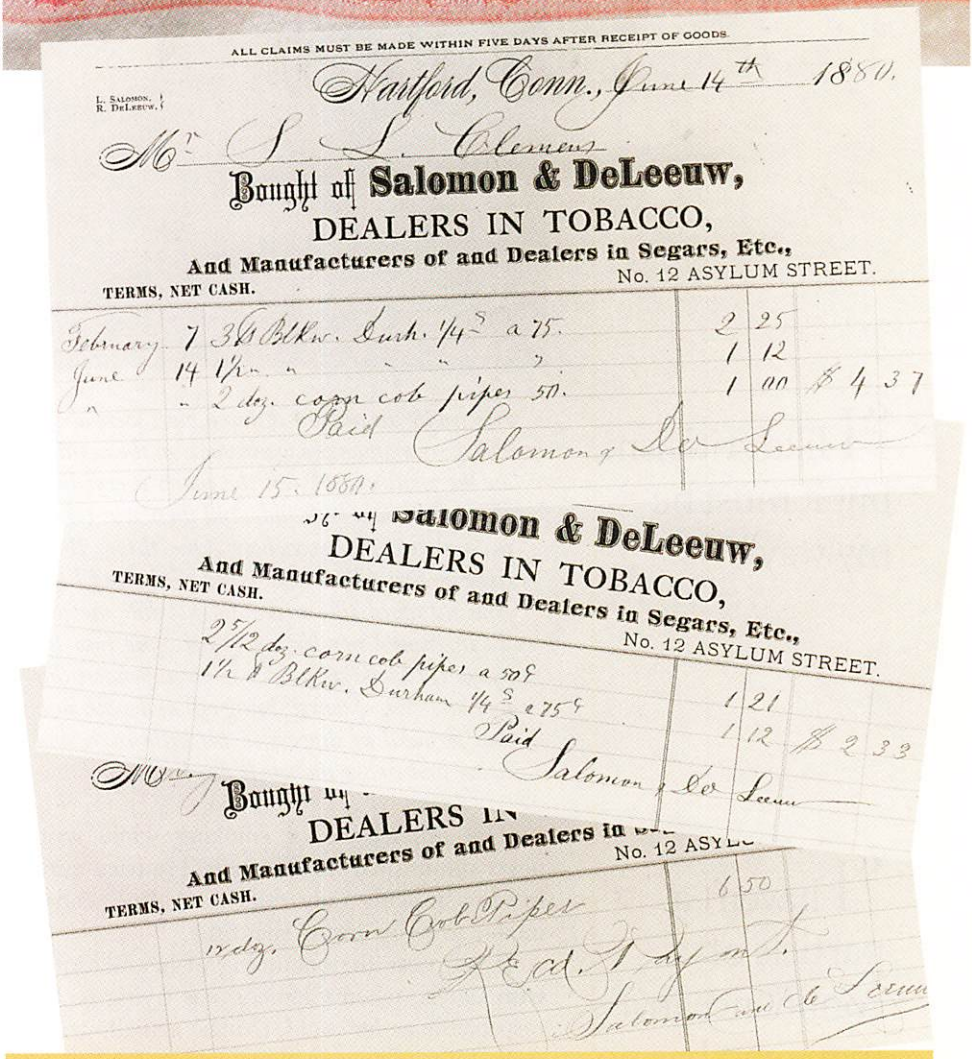
The Quaker City was a paddlewheel steamship, and its cruise to the Holy Land was organized by Henry Ward Beecher's church. Clemens made arrangements to act as correspondent for the San Francisco *Alta California*, which paid his fare in exchange for his travel letters about the trip. It was a whirlwind five-month tour, and Clemens' letters were full of satire and sarcasm concerning his fellow passengers and the sights in the Old World.

On that trip he met Charley Langdon, who showed Clemens an ivory miniature of his sister, Olivia. Clemens later claimed that he fell in love with Olivia at that moment, but that is open to speculation. He only reported the episode decades later, and it has such a flavor of the myth and legend of Mark Twain that it is tempting to suspect embellishment. At any rate, he was able to meet Olivia after his return, and courted her over the following year, much to the dismay of her parents.

He also began "The Innocents Abroad" that year, a book based on his travel letters recounting his adventures on the Quaker City excursion. The writing of the book was an arduous task, and we have an eyewitness account of Clemens' writing process during its composition. An unidentified journalist for the *New York Evening Post* visited Clemens while he was working on the manuscript:

> *And there was Mark Twain in a little back room, with a sheet-iron stove, a dirty, musty carpet of the cheapest description, a bed, and two or three common chairs. The little drum stove was full of ashes, running over on the zinc sheet; the bed seemed to be unmade for a week, the slops had not been carried out for a fortnight, the room was foul with tobacco smoke, the floor, dirty enough to begin with, was littered with newspapers, from which Twain had cut his letters. Then there were hundreds of pieces of torn manuscripts which had been written and then*

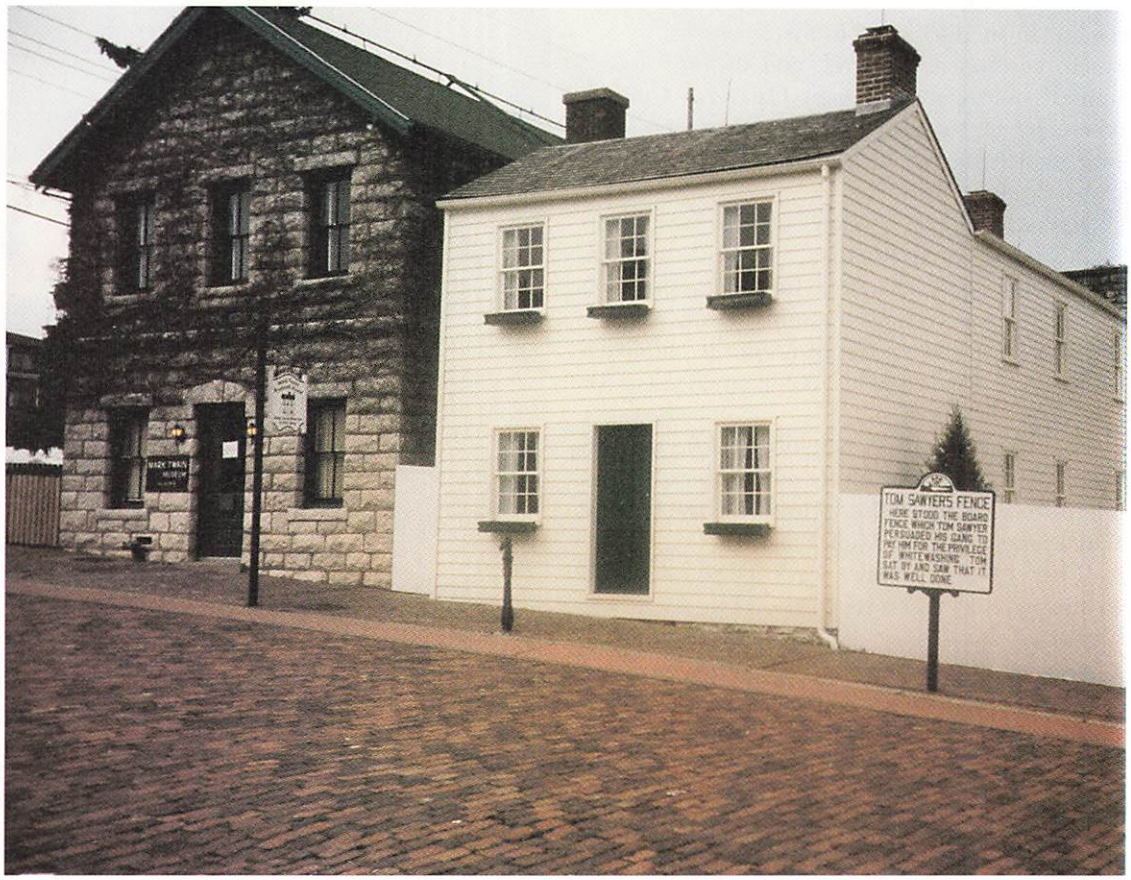



ALL CLAIMS MUST BE MADE WITHIN FIVE DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF GOODS.
Hartford, Conn., June 14th 1880.
Bought of Salomon & DeLeeuw,
DEALERS IN TOBACCO,
And Manufacturers of and Dealers in Segars, Etc.,
No. 12 ASYLUM STREET.
TERMS, NET CASH.
Paid
Salomon & DeLeeuw
Bought of Salomon & DeLeeuw,
DEALERS IN TOBACCO,
And Manufacturers of and Dealers in Segars, Etc.,
No. 12 ASYLUM STREET.
TERMS, NET CASH.
Paid
Salomon & DeLeeuw

As these receipts emphasize, Blackwell's Durham was one of Twain's favorite pipe tobaccos, and corncob pipes were a favorite medium for smoking it. The pipes pictured above were Twain's own and are currently housed in the Mark Twain Museum in Hartford. The receipt photos are courtesy The Mark Twain Project, The Bancroft Library.

Twain often stocked up on smoking supplies before traveling, especially to Europe. In his journal from 1879 he notes that there is "No good smoking tobacco in Europe—no Durham, Vanity F, Lone Jack—but I brought mine with me—been over before."

In a later journal entry Twain reports: "Gave away all my Durham & kept the worst brand in America—still it was of course better than any in Europe—Latakie is almost as good."


TOM SAWYER'S FENCE
HERE STOOD THE BOARD FENCE WHICH TOM SAWYER PERSUADED HIS GANG TO PAY HIM FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF WHITEWASHING. TOM SAT BY AND SAW THAT IT WAS WELL DONE

Clemens' boyhood home still stands in Hannibal, along with his father's law office. Tour information is available by calling the Mark Twain Boyhood Home at 573.221.9010.

"I like criticism, but it must be my way."

"I haven't a particle of confidence in a man who has no redeeming petty vices."

rejected by the author. A dozen pipes were about the apartment on the washstand, on the mantel, on the writing table, on the chairs everywhere that room could be found. And there was tobacco, and tobacco everywhere. One thing, there were no flies. The smoke killed them, and I am now surprised the smoke did not kill me too. Twain would not let a servant come into his room. He would strip down to his suspenders (his coat and vest, of course, being off) and walk back and forward in slippers in his little room and swear and smoke the whole day long.

The importance of smoking while writing never diminished for Clemens. He tried curtailing his smoking only one more time, and was unable to write during that time.

It was near the beginning of his relationship with Olivia, when Clemens was trying to be as respectable as he could, that he actually tried to make himself over to some extent, for her sake. She disapproved of smoking, swearing, drinking, and even humorists—that is to say, she disapproved of Clemens' whole life. "Poor girl," he would write, "anybody who would convince her that I was not a humorist would secure her eternal gratitude. She thinks a humorist is something pretty awful."

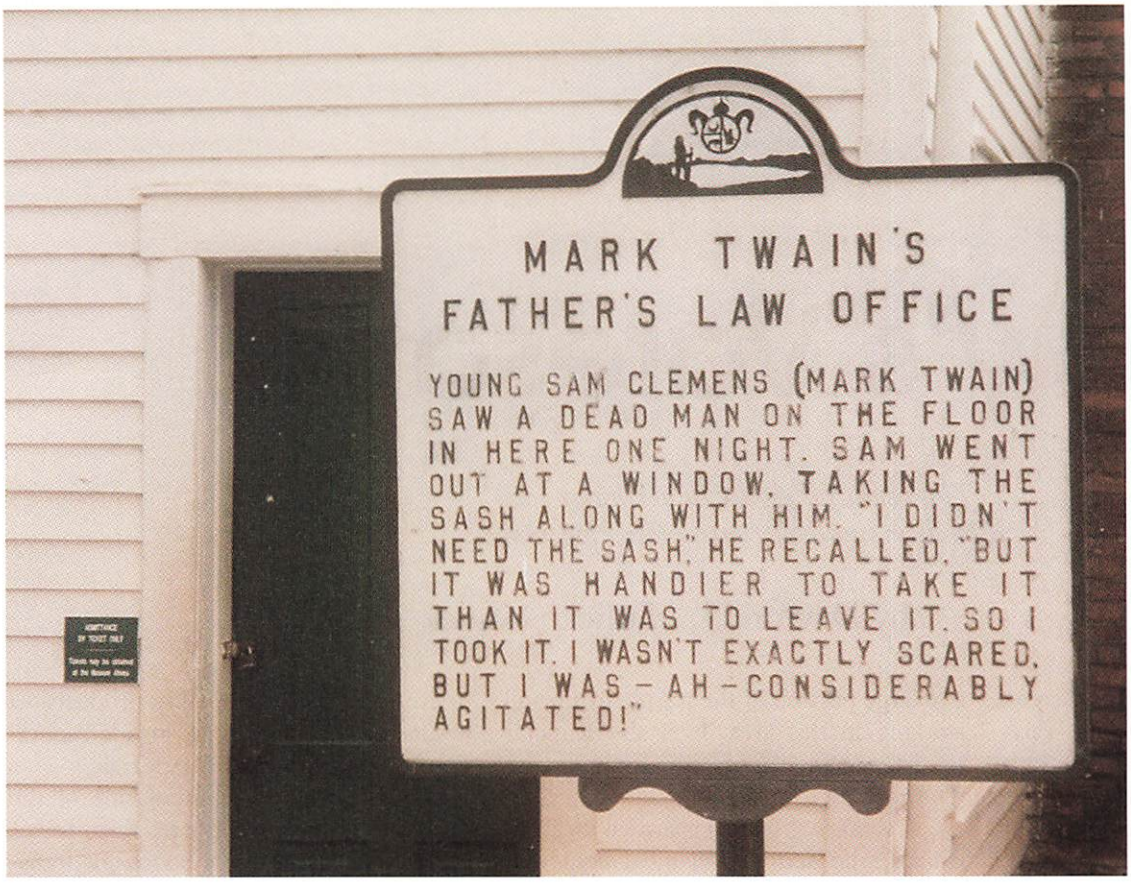
It was rough going. Olivia's parents wanted letters of reference before consenting to the marriage, and the letters that came back from the West were not complimentary. "Clemens is a humbug," wrote a San Francisco clergyman, "a man with talent, no doubt, but will make trivial use of it." Another letter professed the expectation that Clemens "would fill a drunkard's grave." But Clemens insisted that he did not "live backwards," that his character was improved, that his future was what should be considered. The Langdons believed him, and consented to the marriage.

Clemens gave up hard liquor, a pledge that lasted about a year. He quit slouching around with his hands in his pockets. He took up Biblical readings and started attending church. But he steadfastly refused to stop smoking, although he made insinuations, at first, that he might. He wrote to Olivia:

> *I do not know anything I could refuse you if you wanted it done. I am reasonably afraid that you'll stop me from smoking, some day, but if you ever do, you will do it with such a happy grace that I shall be swindled into the notion that I didn't want to smoke any more, anyhow!*

"After all," he would later joke, "what does tobacco matter? Let's have another chapter of Deuteronomy." However, in another letter he amended that notion: "There is no argument that can have even a feather's weight with me against smoking."

Clemens made his living as a lecturer during his engagement to Olivia, and did not enjoy the traveling or the accomodations that were some-


MARK TWAIN'S
FATHER'S LAW OFFICE
YOUNG SAM CLEMENS (MARK TWAIN)
SAW A DEAD MAN ON THE FLOOR
IN HERE ONE NIGHT. SAM WENT
OUT AT A WINDOW, TAKING THE
SASH ALONG WITH HIM. "I DIDN'T
NEED THE SASH," HE RECALLED. "BUT
IT WAS HANDIER TO TAKE IT
THAN IT WAS TO LEAVE IT. SO I
TOOK IT. I WASN'T EXACTLY SCARED,
BUT I WAS – AH – CONSIDERABLY
AGITATED!"

"Chastity—it can be carried too far."

"Fleas can be taught nearly anything that a Congressman can."

"My works are like water. The works of the great masters are like wine. But everyone drinks water."

times forced upon him. He was often the guest of prominent people along his route, and it rankled him no end when the rules of their homes required that he refrain from smoking:

> *I talked last night in Canton, & had the hospitalities of Mr. Ames...inflicted on me—& it is the last time I will stop in a New England private house. Their idea of hospitality is to make themselves comfortable first, & leave the guest to get along if he can. No smoking allowed on the premises...I hate Mr. Ames with all my heart.*

Even when he is in better humor, and more tolerant of his nonsmoking hosts, Clemens' resentment is evident:

> *At the hospitable mansion where I am a guest, I have to smoke surreptitiously when all are in bed, to save my reputation, and then draw suspicion upon the cat when the family detect the unfamiliar odor. I never was so absurdly proper in the broad light of day in my life...so far, I am safe; but I am sorry to say that the cat has lost caste.*

Shortly after his marriage to Olivia, when he and his bride had settled in Buffalo, New York, and Clemens had become part owner of a newspaper, his father-in-law Jervis Langdon offered Clemens $10,000 to stop smoking and drinking ale—since he had already given up hard liquor. Twain biographer Justin Kaplan reports:

> *Clemens rejected the bribe—"I can't sell myself," he told Langdon—but he did cut down his smoking drastically, to Sunday afternoons only.... He came almost to a full stop as a writer that year, but by the spring of 1871, when he decided to reject all the conditions of his life in Buffalo and commit himself full time to writing "Roughing It," he had resumed his normal pace of constant smoking through the day and some drinking at night. "If I had sold myself," he said to James T. Fields in 1876, after telling him about Langdon's offer, "I couldn't have written my book, or I couldn't have gone to sleep, but now everything works perfectly well."*

Things were indeed going well for Clemens. He was a respected, best-selling author, a famous lecturer, a business owner. He lived in a mansion with a beautiful, rich wife and more servants than family. He was just coming into his most powerful years as a writer.

But his life was half over, and his good fortune was about to change. *P&T*

This ends Part I of our two-part series on Mark Twain. In our next issue we will describe Twain's rise to worldwide popularity, his financial ruin and subsequent years as an American expatriate, his battle with despair after the loss of all but one member of his immediate family, and finally his financial, literary and personal recovery from his life's tragedies.

Italy's Varesotto

This beautiful region in northwest Italy is home to numerous outstanding pipemakers

by Dayton H. Matlick

In addition to being the source today of many outstanding pipemakers, the Varesotto area in northwestern Italy has long been an important area within Europe.

The Varesotto sits astride one of the main north-south routes within Europe. Trade, culture and warring factions have used the corridor for thousands of years, molding a unique people in their wake.

A second geographic advantage relates to water. The Varesotto sits on the green of the pre-Alpine slopes. The runoff is the beginning of the great Po River—the industrial plain of Italy. It also feeds a number of beautiful lakes, some of considerable size, which are part of the daily life of a large portion of the people living and working in this area. It is also a major tourist attraction for people from all over the world.

It is this region that spawned the individuals who started the movement that became the Roman Empire. It was warriors from northern Italy who conquered the south and built Rome into a world power.

Located where they were, the rich heritage of these people was forged by their constant exposure to change and new ideas. Today, the residents of the Varesotto exhibit a strong work ethic. This is further strengthened by personal desire to create high-quality products—a desire that has built a worldwide reputation for goods from northern Italy.

The Borromeo civilization flourished in and around Lake Maggiore, covering green islands with sumptuous palaces.

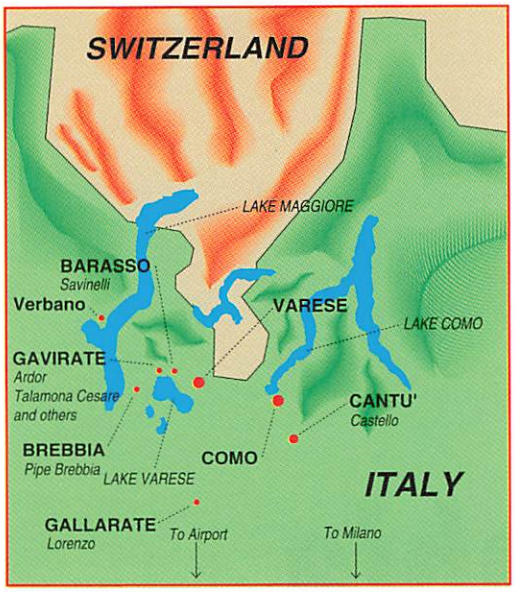
Located on the western side of the Varesotto is Lake Maggiore. Even today, its waters form a major source of transportation between the many cities—large and small—on its shores. Verbano, on the west side of the lake, was the cradle of the Borromeo civilization, with its refined culture. It was in this area that they constructed sumptuous buildings, Italian gardens and the formidable Fortress of Angera. Small islands that once sheltered fishing villages soon held palaces and are today major tourist attractions.

In the center of Varesotto is the smaller Lake Varese with its necklace of small cities, towns and villages. Only a short distance away is the city of Varese, strategically located in the center of this beautiful, productive area.

Further to the east is Como, located at the base of another major lake, Lake Como. Like Lake Maggiore, it is also served by regular, scheduled water transportation that is both pleasant and convenient.

Pipemakers are scattered throughout this area, which is only about two hours drive from east to west. In the map on the opposite page we have indicated the location of some of the many pipemakers in this area. West out of Varese is the town of Barasso, where the Savinelli factory is located. The headquarters is in Milan, the main industrial city of Italy, located only about an hour and a quarter's drive away.

Just beyond Barasso is Gavirate,



home of the Alberto Paronelli private pipe museum, one of the most complete in the world.

At the west end of Lake Varese, a small river flows through the town of Brebbia on the way to Lake Maggiore. Pipe Brebbia is located on that river (see article on page 44 of this issue).

East out of Varese and south of Como is located the city of Cantú, where Castello pipes are manufactured.

These three pipemakers are all celebrating the longevity of their companies in 1997.

Savinelli is celebrating 120 years of service to consumers of tobacco products, most of which was through renowned tobacconist shops in Milan and, later, Genoa. In earlier years, Savinelli contracted with individuals to have its pipes make. In the 1950s, its current factory was built in Barasso near the site of the huge Rossi pipemaking operation.

Rossi was one of the biggest manufacturers of pipes in the world during its heyday. It is said it filled a railroad car each day with its pipes. More than 900 people worked in the sprawling complex.

Rossi pipes were machine made and sold so cheaply they had to stamp "made of genuine briar" on each pipe in an effort to get people to believe a briar pipe could be so inexpensive. In direct contrast to Rossi, Savinelli chose to focus on higher quality and higher price, as did many of the better Italian pipemakers of today.

The reminder of the Rossi operation is there every day for Savinelli workers. The now defunct Rossi operation is close enough it can be seen from Savinelli windows.

Although its pipes are made in Barasso, the headquarters of Savinelli is in downtown Milan, close to the famous Duomo or cathedral. It is also only a block away from the original Savinelli tobacconist shop, opened 120 years ago. The Savinelli business is still operated by direct descendants of the founding father, Achille Savinelli.

Castello was founded in 1947, 50 years ago, by Carlo Scotti in the city of Cantú. Scotti had worked in Switzerland as a tobacconist before moving to Italy. Scotti devoted several years in a search for new approaches to pipemaking before he joined with another pipemaker named Renso. With Scotti's ideas and Renso's gifted hands they formed a partnership that quickly lifted Pipe Castello to the top tiers of Italian pipemakers.

The focus on quality, whether of smooth or rusticated pipes, has made Castello pipes famous among world pipe collectors.

These pipemakers played their own role in the transformation of Italian production from mass-produced, low-priced consumer products, to its current reputation as one of the world leaders in the fabrication of high-quality items.

These are some of the best names in Italian pipemaking and will be the source of articles in future issues. Current plans call for the Savinelli article to be in the Winter issue of P&T, followed by Castello in the Spring issue. *P&T*

Small towns, several boasting pipemakers, sit shoulder to shoulder around the small, but beautiful Lake Varese.

pipe brebbia

Northwest Italy pipemaker with a unique history marks 50 years with a special celebration

by Dayton H. Matlick

Pipe Brebbia is located near the small village in northwest Italy from which it draws its name. Situated between two lakes in one of the most beautiful areas of Italy, the village is within sight of the awe-inspiring Swiss Alps.

The entrance to Pipe Brebbia is just at the edge of this village of 3,200 inhabitants, down a quarter-mile lane bordered on both sides by open fields dotted with clumps of trees. The peace of the place surrounds like a sheltering presence.

The white headquarters building looms straight ahead, two stories tall with one-story wings on either side set forward to create a courtyard. The right section has a large pipe painted on the front, complete with a partly open cap from which smoke curls upward. The left section is newer in appearance, with a drawing of a man working on what looks like an electric motor.

It turns out that the large central building is more than 110 years old—the original building on the site. In addition to housing the pipemaking facilities on the second floor, most of the first floor is a water-powered electric generating plant that has been in operation since the beginning. What do electricity and the electric light have to do with making pipes? The answer in Brebbia is, "A lot!" But it took 67 years for the connection to be made.

It wasn't until 1878 and 1879 that British inventor Thomas Swan and American inventor Thomas Edison simultaneously developed the carbon-filament lamp, which became a commercial success. This was followed in 1881-82 by the New York City installation of a complete electrical distribution system for power and light, designed by Edison.

In an amazingly short time, considering the year and the distance, the impact was felt in little Brebbia. In 1884, progressive-thinking Achille Buzzi built a power plant on a small river running between Lake Varese and Lake Maggiore, a beautiful lake steeped in history.

At first, people in the surrounding rural communities didn't want anything to do with electricity—this work of the Devil. Then the fledgling power company installed free lights on poles in the squares of surrounding villages. Soon the women of the villages were taking their chairs and their handwork into the square at night where they could talk and work together. The age of electricity was launched!

Our story now jumps those 67 years into the future. The Second World War is over and Italy is in shambles. Just about everything from the economy to transportation is barely working. Everything has to be built up again, except the Brebbia power plant, which is still running, as it is today.

Uncle Bernardo Papa has made some astute investments that survived the war better than most. He advises two of his nephews, Enea Buzzi, grandson of Achille Buzzi, and Achille Savinelli, to get involved in something that can be exported to countries with sound economies. Because of the Savinelli family involvement in tobacco and pipes for almost 70 years and Enea Buzzi's love for pipes, the potential of making pipes sparks an immediate interest. The uncle's offer of financial backing settles the discussions.

The building housing the power plant, which now belongs to Enea Buzzi, has a lot of unused space on the second floor and proves to be an excellent site for the fledgling pipe company. It has the additional advantage of free electricity to run needed machinery. It almost seems as

These six pipes, four natural and two walnut, rate AA and AAA in Brebbia's Linea A. The two pipes on the previous page are in the popularly-priced Cellini line.

though the whole development of electricity existed only to set the stage for this pipe drama.

It is decided that Achille Savinelli will live in Milan, where the most important Savinelli tobacconist shop is located, and be in charge of sales and distribution for the new company, while Enea Buzzi will run the pipemaking operation in Brebbia. All pipes made will carry the name of Savinelli and be sold through the Savinelli tobacconist shops.

From its 1947 beginning, the new company decides to go against existing trends. Just a few miles away in Barasso, the enormous Rossi pipe company reputedly turns out a rail car full of pipes every day. However, their 900 employees produce pipes so cheaply they must stamp "made from real briar" on each pipe in an effort to convince the skeptics.

Post World War II Italy is far from the Italy of 1997. The reputation for craftsmanship has yet to be developed. The approach throughout Italy is to make a profit by producing low-quality products as cheaply as possible, making profits based on volume. This is before the heydays of Ferrari, Gucci, Georgio Armani and other Italian companies whose high-quality products would come to be known throughout the world.

Equal owners of the new company, the cousins are in the forefront of this new direction. In contrast to Rossi, they decide to produce high-quality pipes and to follow their uncle's advice about developing export outlets.

However, both principals are strong, opinionated, talented individuals. Friction develops until, by 1953, it is decided that Savinelli will be able to buy some of his pipes elsewhere and Buzzi will sell some of his pipes to retailers other than Savinelli. By 1956, Savinelli builds his own factory only a quarter of a mile from the Rossi factory in Barasso and all pipes produced by Buzzi go out under the name Pipe Brebbia.

A second trend the young company soon is fighting is not one of their choosing. At the time the new pipe company starts, pipes are the cheapest and most popular way of smoking in Italy; cigarettes are relatively expensive. However, the popularity of American cigarettes is established by the American occupational troops. Major progress in the automation of cigarette-making soon results in huge reductions in cigarette prices. The economic advantage of pipes is gone! Combined with the decision to produce high-quality pipes, the fledgling company has more than enough challenges.

"To succeed, Brebbia had to innovate," says Luciano Buzzi, son of Enea, and head of Pipe Brebbia today. "In the early days, my father created a cap for pipes that would keep out the rain, but let needed air in through strategically placed holes. We were also one of the first to move to acrylic mouthpieces—mouthpieces that always look good. We also developed a smoke dispersing device—a small insert for the mouthpiece. It breaks up the stream of smoke and spreads it more evenly throughout the mouth. Especially if you are a beginning pipe

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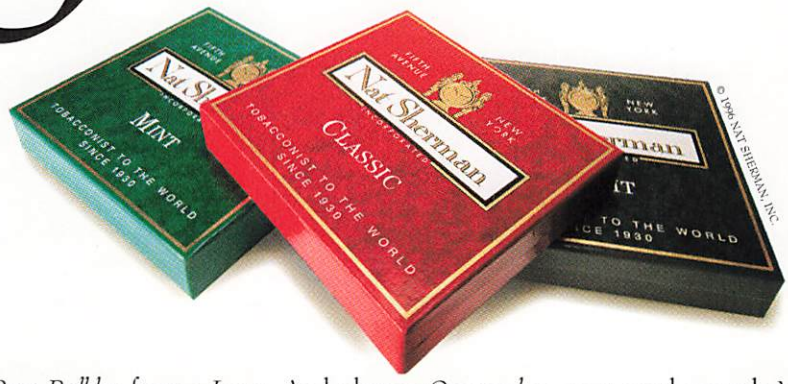

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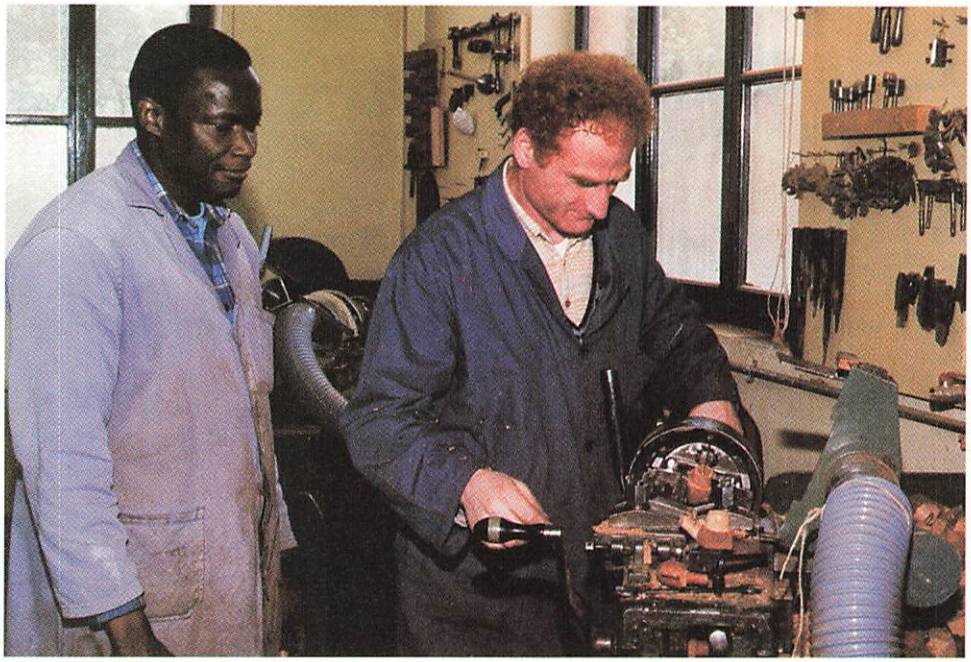


smoker, it can reduce tongue burn. The insert pops out for cleaning your pipe.

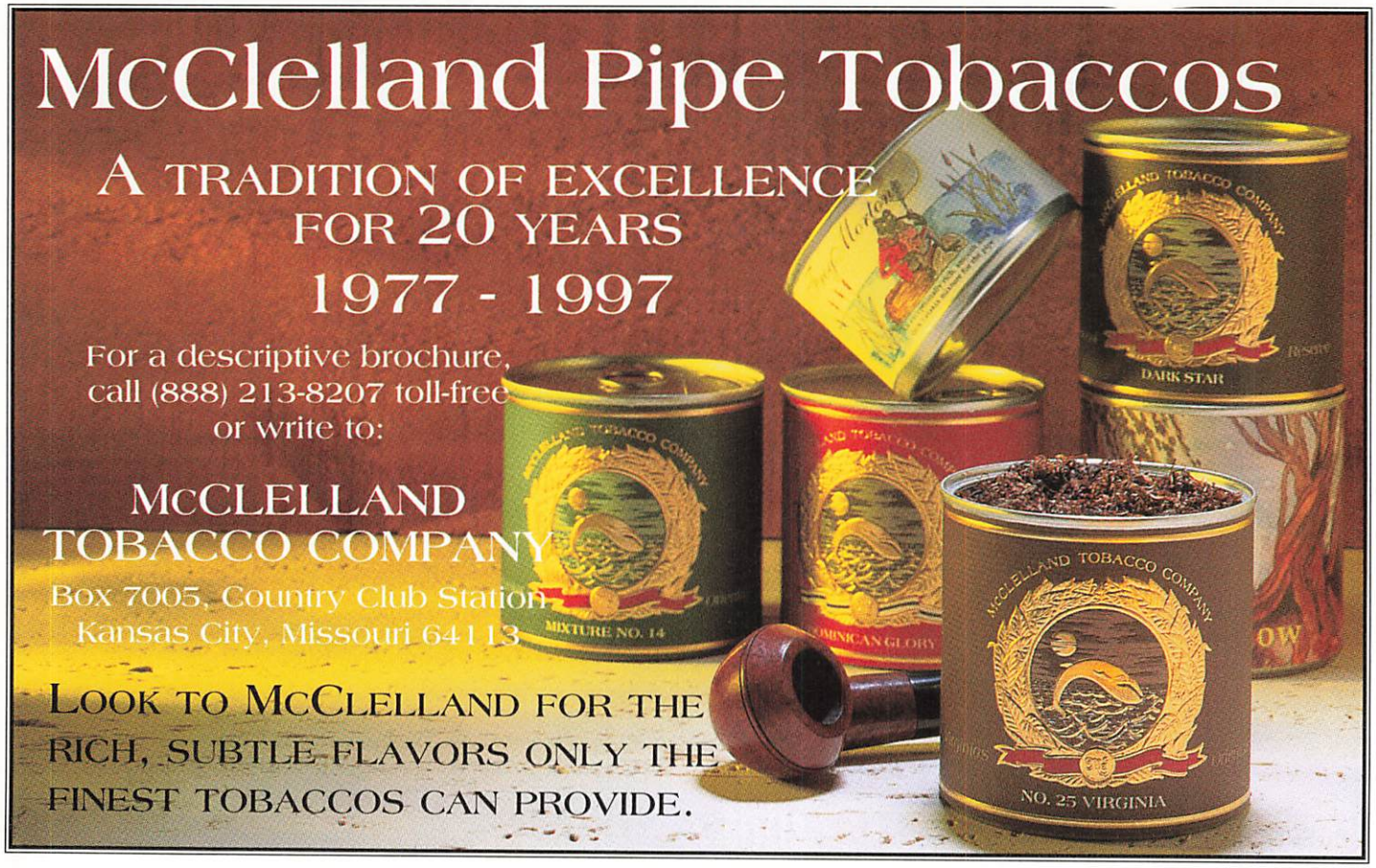
"The secret of Brebbia's successes is that we are a mix of classical, freehand and personal designs—selling a balance of finish, quality and form to fit individual tastes. In every pipe you can see the origin of the shape. As a result, all of our pipes look familiar, even if the shape is basically new.

"To foster this, we make all of our mouthpieces by hand, giving each a particular look. We also like to give our shanks a cylindrical shape; and we pay special attention to the point where the shank and bowl come together. We want to give the impression that the bowl grows organically out of the stem. People who are 'Brebbia fellows' can tell this look at any distance."

While Luciano talks about these innovations, his pen is seldom still. Soon drawings fill page after page—simple, direct, informative. The mini-mystery of the drawings is solved when he talks about joining the company 20 years ago.

It turns out that Luciano, a tall, soft-spoken, but typically emotional Italian, is a graduate architect. At one time, his goal in life was to design houses. He progressed to the point where he had designed some home interiors. Then, when he was 23, his father asked that he come to the factory and help with its reorganization. He started in shipping and warehousing and never turned back. "I fell in love with the creativity of producing beautiful pipes from briar. Now, the pipe is my life!" says Luciano.

His home is evidence that the architectural training is still with him. He designed a structure with an off-center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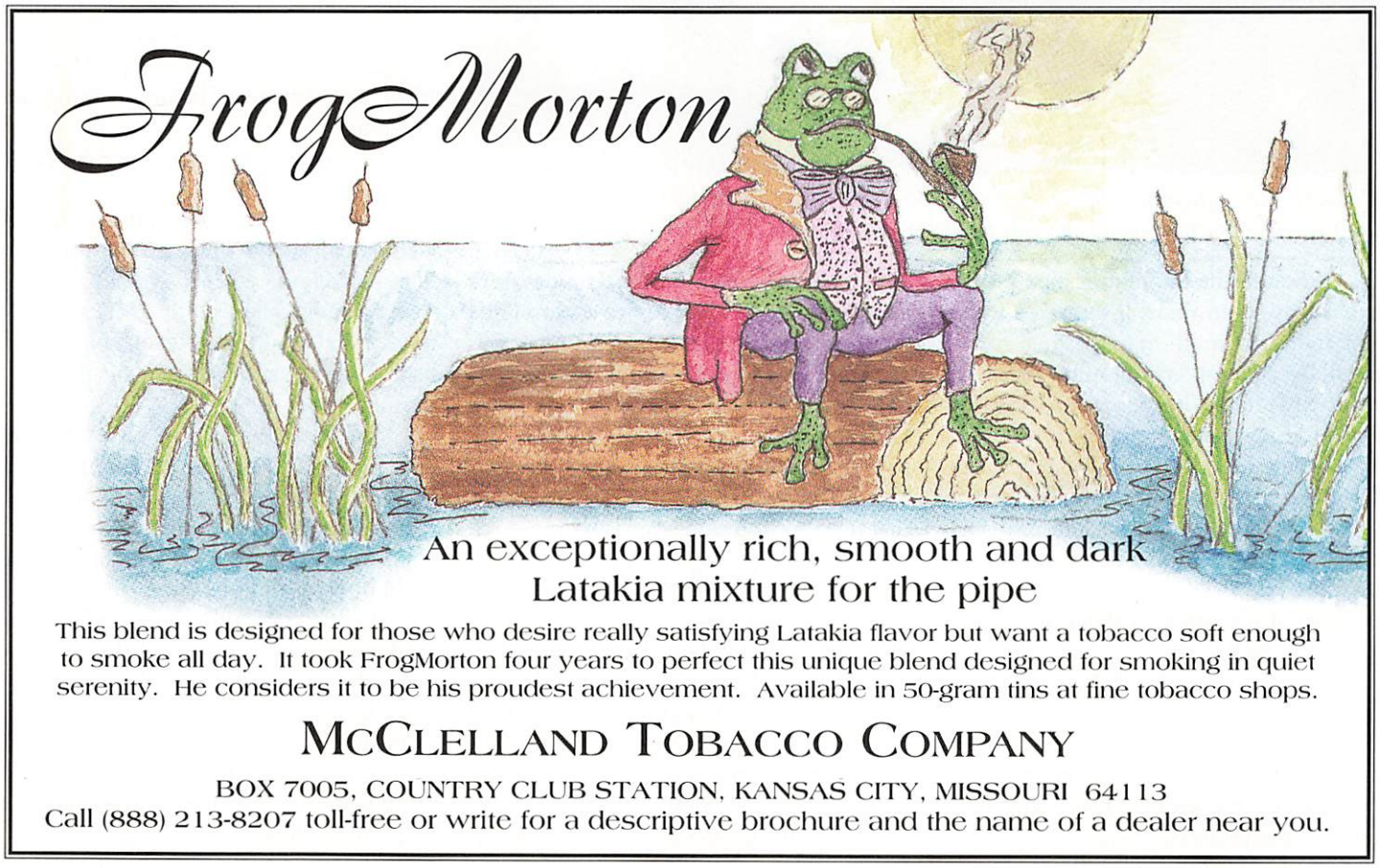
roof where beams soar upward in an interesting interplay of shapes. Glass barriers between the beams reveal this wooden beauty, while keeping air movement, including heating and cooling, under control.

In a nearby garage rest three other projects—his "girls"—two Harley-Davidson motorcycles he has modified himself, and an immaculate 1946 MG-TC—one of the original molded wood frame models—that he has restored himself. All rest under protective covering until they have their turn again in the sun.

When Luciano joined Pipe Brebbia 20 years ago, there were 35 employees, down from 90 during the company's heyday. In the earlier days, with the far greater numbers, workers were specialized. Today, with 14 people making pipes, supported by three others, including Luciano, the workshop turns out 14,000 pipes a year from primarily Ligurian Italian briar. For the last 10 years, all pipes produced have been based on Luciano's architecturally-aided designs.

In the meantime, Enea Buzzi has been pioneering new directions on his own. They can all be traced back to his project to compete with Falcon pipes, beginning in 1964. To do this he had to learn to mold metal, especially aluminum. Then he mastered the really difficult technology of applying chrome to cast aluminum. ▶

On the left, Constantino adjusts a pipemaking machine that will be operated by Ousmane Camara, while Mario, above, fits mouthpieces to shanks. Both Constantino and Mario are veteran pipemakers who also specialize in freehand pipes.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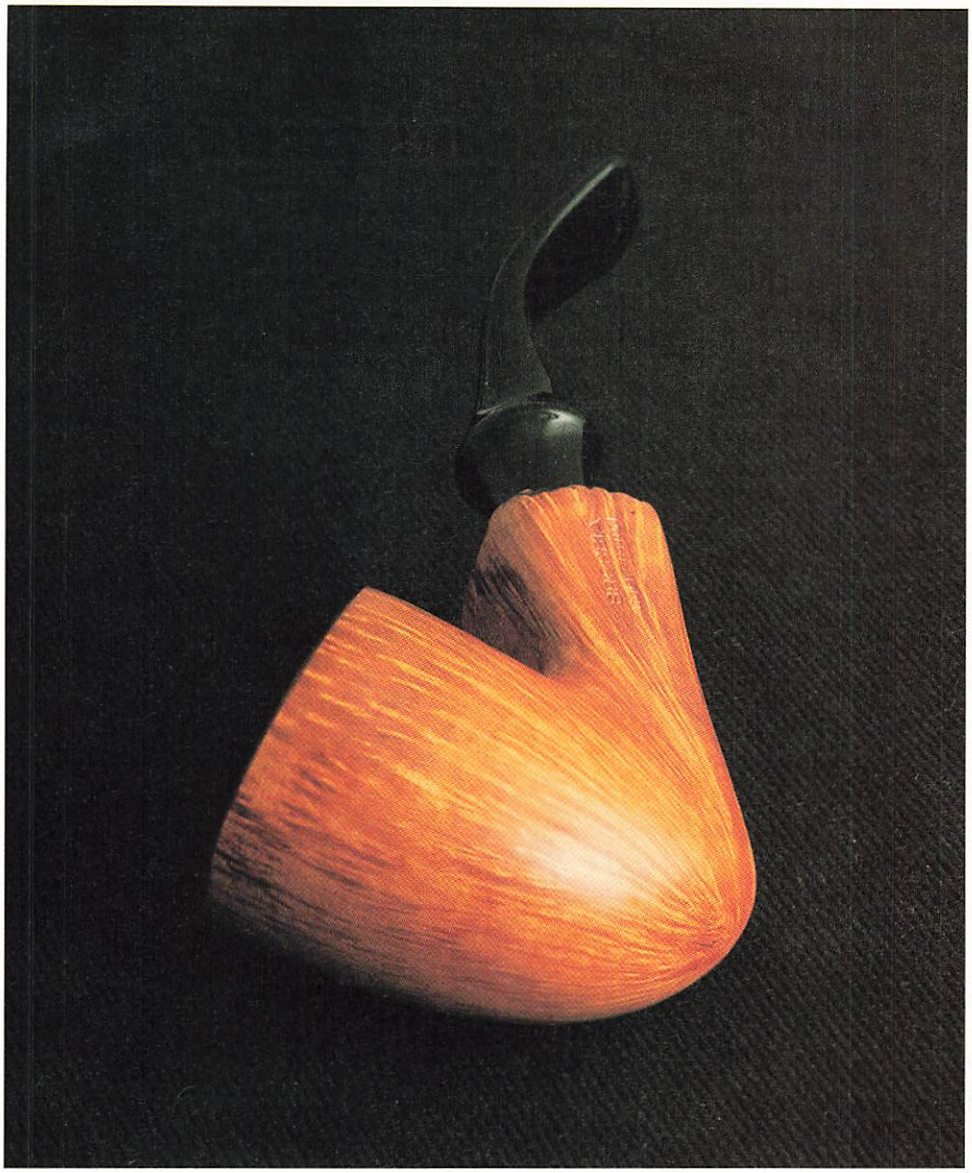

This outstanding Brebbia Collection pipe ranks four stars on a scale of one to four. The Collection line is freehand and only loosely based on classical shapes.

Although the aluminum pipe project lasted only seven years, it opened a whole new industry for the family, one greatly aided by a cheap, continuing source of electricity. Today, in the newer wing, 74-year-old Enea is involved full-time in casting 60,000 aluminum parts a day, primarily for motors and pumps to be used in appliances like dishwashers and refrigerators. "Instead of slowing down with age, if anything he works harder than ever," says Luciano of his father, shaking his head in mock disbelief.

In their large 6,000-pipe museum, Luciano shows how earlier Brebbia pipes leaned heavily toward caricatures, meeting the demands of the day, and gradually evolved into the more classical and freehand shapes preferred today.

Pipe Brebbia sells most of its pipes in Italy, followed by Germany specifically and Europe in general. Brebbia pipes were distributed in the United States through a variety of distributors from the mid-1970s until 1993, with the death of Barry Levin. Since then Luciano has been without a U.S. distributor and shipments to the U.S. have basically ceased. The good news is that negotiations are currently underway that may bring Brebbia pipes back to U.S. pipe smokers, perhaps by 1998.

"I buy about 25,000 pieces of briar a year," says Luciano. "Briar is like our bank. If things go better one year, I buy more briar; if they are worse, I buy less. In any case, I have enough briar stocked for five years...perhaps not for all dimensions, but for most. Briar must dry for at least a year before use. Longer is better.

"The first period of drying is especially important. We keep the briar in both high temperature and high humidity. This is to allow the briar to dry very slowly, from the inside outward. For this reason, old workshops with a good inventory of briar have the advantage in making quality briar pipes that smoke sweetly from the beginning. The only problem with this is the big investment necessary to carry briar for four or five years.

"When the head is turned, the briar is dried even longer. In addition, after we shape a pipe, we like to leave it for six months before finishing it. It colors better and is easier to handle and finish. In addition, the smoking pleasure is much better due to a sweeter taste right from the first bowl of tobacco.

"While I was reorganizing the workshop, people had to learn more than one skill. Now, most of our workers can do everything necessary. The average worker here today is around 40 years old. Two individuals do most of our freehand work and follow those pipes from beginning to end. They are Constantino, who has been with us for 15 years, and Mario, who has been here 10 years."

Pipes are made in one of two methods. For the lower class ebauchon briar from the center of the root, machines are used to form the basic shape of the pipe, using models created for the purpose. With this approach, little attention is paid to grain, but straight-grain pipes are identified and upgraded before sanding and finishing.

All pipes made from plateaux briar—from the outside of the root—are approached in an entirely different way, to take full advantage of their superior grain. These much more expensive blocks are all worked individually, with great attention to detail. Usually the whole pipe, from beginning to end, is made by the same person.

"We have to make the pipe following the grain," says Luciano. "This means the bowl on the pipe will change continuously until the surface is clean of flaws. This approach doubles the number of straight-grain pipes produced.

"With this approach, finishing—sandpapering, coloring, polishing, etc.—takes about 90 percent of the total labor. This is extremely important because it gives the final look of the pipe. Especially the sandpapering because, as a pipe is worked this way, the form can be modified to eliminate flaws."

Of the 14,000 pipes produced each year, only about 1,000 are straight grains. ▶

Dark Air-Cured

There are two things you can't hide in western Kentucky: honest living and an unhurried job of growing and curing dark air-cured tobacco

by Cecil H. Yancy Jr.

Standing beneath a wild cherry tree, James Herman Rafferty of Owensboro, Kentucky, looks beyond the light-colored leaves of his burley tobacco crop to his small patch of dark air-cured tobacco. Much like a grandfather seeing his past, present and legacy before him, Rafferty tells me about the almost black tobacco that has shaped his life as well as the life of Kentucky.

Grown primarily in the western-central section of Kentucky, dark air-cured tobacco has a storied past and a growing future in moist snuff products and pipe tobacco blends. On the books at the United States Department of Agriculture as Type 36 Green River Dark Air-Cured Tobacco, this tobacco requires hands-on experience in the field and delicate handling at harvest and sale. The long hours of hoeing, cultivation, slow growth, harvest and curing pay off through premium prices for this specialty tobacco.

Rafferty grows dark air-cured much the same way his father, grandfather and great-grandfather did. He and his son, Samuel, continue the tradition in Owensboro, growing an acre and a half of the black leaf. Although he raises 35,000 pounds of burley tobacco each year, it is the dark tobacco that more than pulls its weight on the farm.

"There's not near as much dark air-cured tobacco grown in Kentucky as there used to be 50 or 60 years ago," says Rafferty, who over the years has "swapped" dark tobacco acreage for burley. Despite the decline in acreage, dark air-cured requires long hours of labor-intensive work.

"Yes sir, this is a hands-on kind of crop," says Rafferty. "You need to watch and look after it all the time and baby it along to come out with a good crop."

Rafferty and his son start the process in early spring, planting seeds in raised beds. From those seeds spring the plants with a trademark dark color. The plants are then pulled by hand and transplanted from May 15 up until June 10, depending on the weather.

Once the crop is in the ground, it requires exacting attention to detail to bring it to maturity.

"Dark tobacco is a little different than growing burley," says Rafferty, holding an 18-inch leaf of dark tobacco he judges to be about three weeks from harvest. "Generally, it's best to cultivate it a little more and also don't fertilize quite as heavy as other types of tobaccos." In burley and flue-cured fields, by contrast, fertilization is recommended, if not somewhat overdone.

The added cultivation prunes the roots of the plants and the lighter applications of fertilizer bring the tobacco plants along at a slow-hand pace, says Bill Maksymowicz, a University of Kentucky agronomist who works with dark tobacco producers.

"You try to make it grow slow," says Rafferty, motioning with his hands. Even then, there's unwanted growth. In tobacco, there's almost a sucker born every minute, to use a P.T. Barnum expression.

Suckers grow between the stalk and the base of the leaf, robbing the leaf of vital nutrients. The process of removing the suckers is called "suckering" and must be done on a timely basis to allow the leaves to develop fully and properly. Rafferty does use chemicals on occasion to deal with the suckers, but most of the time he gets out in the field and breaks off the extra growth by hand. "The way I feel about it, anything that will kill something will likely stunt the growth of the tobacco," he says. "It's a small point, but one that shows up at auction time."

With timely cultivation of the middles of the rows, Rafferty keeps a check on weeds. More often than not, however, the fields will still need "hoeing." There are few weeds that can withstand chopping from a sharp hoe. Except in a rainy year.

"Several years ago, I had a man working for me who was hoeing the tobacco in a rainy year," recalls Rafferty. "He'd go out there and chop all this crabgrass out of the middles because it was too wet to get in there with a tractor. It wouldn't die. Come the rain, the crabgrass would grow back again and the man had to return to

Dark air-cured tobacco, shown in the foreground, ripens later than the burley tobacco, ready for harvest in the background.

the field with his hoe. The third time, he got a wheelbarrow and started pushing the crabgrass out in a wheelbarrow and dumping it at the end of the row," he chuckles.

Determining the right time to harvest is as much art and experience as it is science. "See those yellow specks? It won't be long before harvest," says Rafferty.

If the job up until now has been labor-intensive, it now becomes even more so.

"You have to keep all the dirt off the leaves. And don't let it get rained on after it's cut. If you do, you're not going to get paid much," says Rafferty. Discolorations, as well as holes made by insects in the leaf, aren't welcomed either.

While the harvest of other types of tobaccos begins as soon as the dew dries and continues throughout the day, dark tobacco is at its best in the late afternoon. Workers cut the tobacco at ground level with a machete. The tobacco is either left in a pile until it "wilts down" or individual stalks may be "spiked" on a metal cylinder that sits atop a piece of wood. The spiked tobacco creates a "rick."

After the dew dries off the following morning, Rafferty and his crew take the tobacco to be hung in the same barn where burley was cured just over a month before. Opened boards on the side of the black barn allow air to circulate among the many ricks of tobacco hanging from rafters. A tin roof holds in the humidity that cures the tobacco. The process of curing takes about six weeks to complete, creating the desired moisture level and dark color.

Little has changed from the time Rafferty grew his first crop of dark tobacco some 60 years ago. Once the tobacco is "cured," workers strip the individual leaves off the stalk, separating them into three or four grades.

Grading tobacco is a careful process that requires the Raffertys to discriminate among the several leaf qualities that grew on the same stalk. There is no way to hide a poor job of growing once the tobacco is off the stalk.

Rafferty wraps a single tobacco leaf around about 25 other leaves of like quality at the top of the tobacco stem. Similar to tying a necktie, Rafferty tucks the tie leaf inside the center of the knot he has created around the other leaves. It is this presentation he will take to the market in Owensboro for twice- to thrice-weekly sales.

"You can handle burley pretty rough and still come out with the same price," says Rafferty. "With dark air-cured it has to be in the basket neat, straight and pressed. It makes quite a difference in price."

What defines quality in dark air-cured tobacco hasn't changed a whole lot in the last 50 or 60 years. A leaf with plenty of body and length, cured correctly, fetches top price every time.

"What we call quality you can pretty much put your finger on and say, 'This is quality tobacco,'" says Maksymowicz, the tobacco agronomist. "And a premium will be paid for that quality."

Dark air-cured tobacco regularly brings as much as 50 cents per pound above the support price, fetching $2.40 a pound at auction. In contrast, burley brings around $1.60 a pound.

To get the premium price, the farmer often has to walk a tightrope between sweating the tobacco to death and curing it correctly. "You're walking a fine line to get the humidity just right to bring out that brown to reddish-brown color that's desired," says Maksymowicz.

The curing process is the final step in producing this "less than forgiving tobacco," says Maksymowicz. "It's less forgiving when you cut it, less forgiving when you put it in the barn and less forgiving when you take it to market."

Rafferty, however, seems to be at home in this "less than forgiving" environment. He has been plowing, curing and selling dark air-cured tobacco since he was nine years old. "My grandfather

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James Rafferty, son Sam and helpers work to get the burley crop harvested and cured before the dark air-cured crop follows along behind. In comparison, the dark air-cured tobacco requires much greater care and attention in both harvest techniques and curing.

helped me on my first piece of tobacco ground," he says. "We cleared it and set it by hand, planting around the stumps."

In his younger days, the now 69-year-old Rafferty worked the cash crop with mules. A missing finger on his left hand still reminds him of those days. His finger got caught in the bridle as he was hitching up the mule to plow.

In a much-treasured photo album are pictures of his tobacco-growing ancestors in the dark tobacco fields. A pipe smoking great-great-grandfather lived to be 106 years old. A great-grandfather lived to be almost 100 years old. Albert Einstein once theorized that if one could catch up to the speed of light, time would stand still. This is the case in dark air-cured tobacco.

Today, Rafferty and his son carry on the tradition as the fifth and sixth generations on the farm. Standing beside the black barn this day, they are bathed in the humidity of early August, but clothed in the pride of workmanship.

"It's such a family-oriented thing," says Pem Clark, executive director of the Stemming District Association in Henderson, Kentucky, the group that administers the price support program for dark air-cured tobacco farmers. "You've got families: husband, wife, cousins, nephews working to get the crop in. Farmers raise their children, pay church tithes and mortgages with money made from tobacco."

Top prices for quality leaf, as well as growing moist snuff and pipe tobacco markets, will keep this tobacco on the farm. Not to mention James Herman Rafferty and his son Samuel. *P&T*

Black Patch Wars

When you hear a tobacco farmer these days talking about fighting for his crop, it's largely rhetorical. For folks at the turn of the century, words turned into an outright war against the powerful Duke Tobacco Trust and any farmers suspected of selling their tobacco to the company that controlled more than 80 percent of the smoking and chewing market. The violence became known as the "Black Patch Wars," named after the dark tobacco that grows in western Kentucky and Tennessee.

As the Duke Trust grew larger by gobbling up small tobacco manufacturing companies, the prices farmers received for their crop declined from a high of 12 cents a pound to a low of 1 cent a pound. It is estimated that American Tobacco Company, the trade name of the Trust, "robbed" farmers of more than $5 million on their 1904 crop alone.

It was more than many farmers could take. David Amoss of Caldwell County, Kentucky, emerged as the leader of the group known as the Dark Tobacco District Planters Protection Association of Kentucky and Tennessee. Amoss created the culture of the Association through a mixture of Masonic and Ku Klux Klan rituals. They did their work at night, wearing black masks to conceal their identity, and garnered the infamous name, "Night Riders."

In their overzealous quest to influence tobacco prices upward, the Night Riders whipped farmers who refused to join their association, beat up young women and children, dynamited farm machines. The threatening letter farmer Henry Pace of Kirksey, Kentucky, received was typical: "If you deliver tobacco outside the Association, ... we will get you and your barns for we are tired of being fooled with by you and your kind! Night Riders."

Although 70 percent of the farmers joined the Association, it had little effect on tobacco prices at the warehouse. Even when the Association started in 1904, there was opposition to it. By 1908, the authorities had had enough. The government even thought about calling out the military to squelch the terror. Lawsuits were brought against the Association and its members.

In the end, American Tobacco Co. was found to be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act. American Tobacco Co., Liggett and Myers, Lorillard and R.J. Reynolds emerged from the breakup. And the Night Riders rode into infamous history, a dark story even today in the Black Patch.

For further reading, I recommend "On Bended Knees, The Night Rider Story," by Bill Cunningham. It was published in 1983 by McClanahan Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee. Cunningham is a judge in Lyon County, Kentucky.—*C.Y.*

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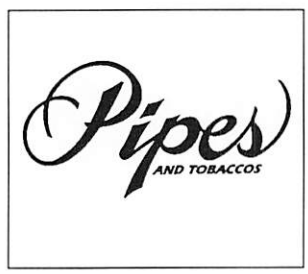
3 

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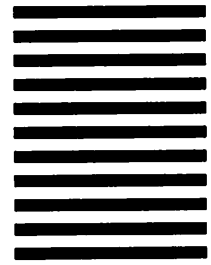

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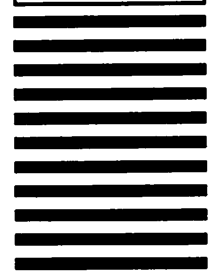

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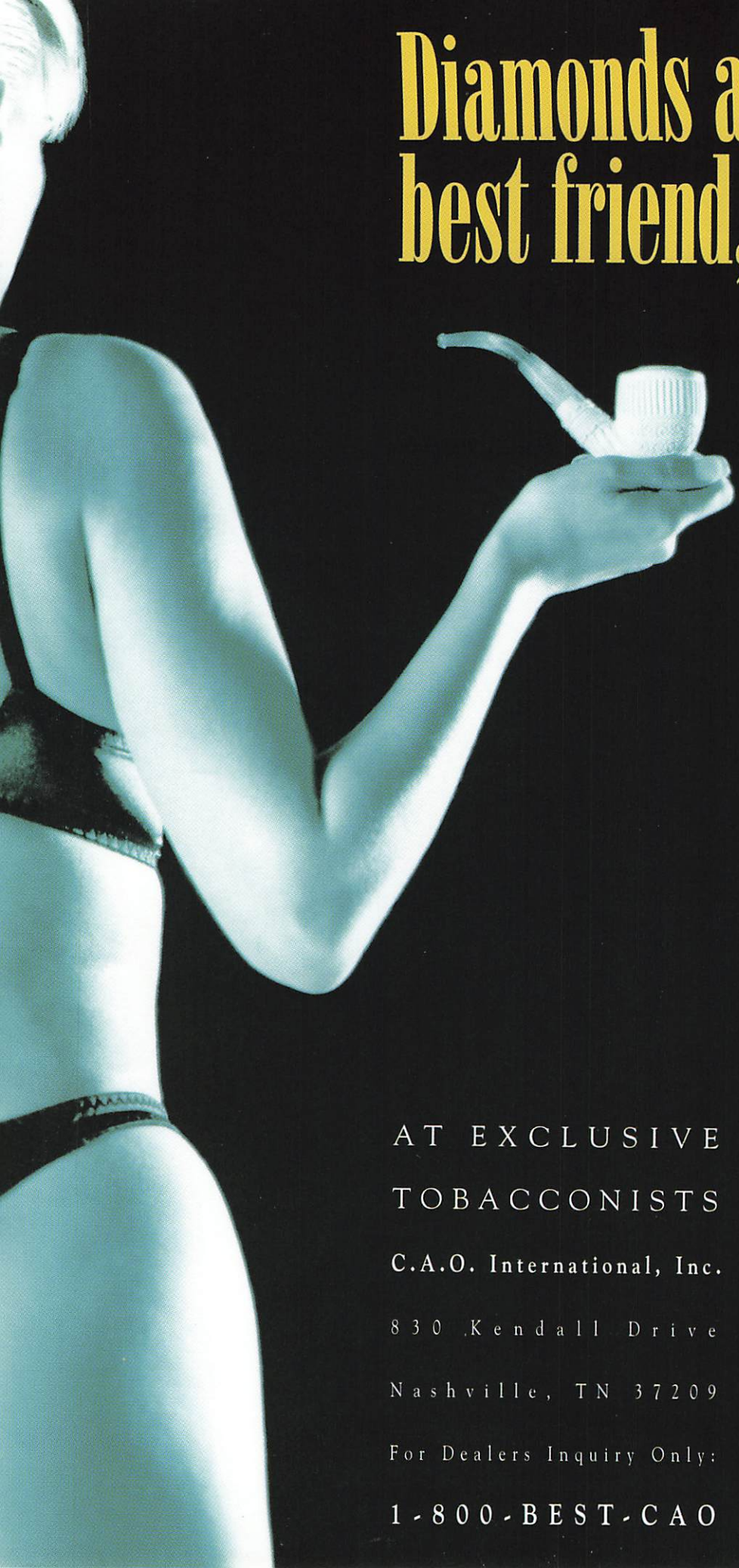

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